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Economic and Social Council
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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: Annual ministerial review

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review

Summary

In response to the General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/67/290 and A/RES/61/16), the Regional Commissions have been asked to provide regional inputs to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Annual Ministerial Review. The ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) discussed the ECE contribution for these meetings on the basis of an ECE secretariat paper entitled, *Key messages for the post-2015/SDG process from the perspective of ECE.* Below is the Chairperson's summary of such consultations.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II

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I. Chairperson's Summary

1. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/67/290 and A/RES/61/16), the Regional Commissions have been asked to provide regional inputs to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Annual Ministerial Review. The ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) discussed the ECE contribution for these meetings on the basis of an ECE secretariat paper entitled, *Key messages for the post-2015/SDG process from the perspective of ECE.*

2. In the discussion the member States emphasized the important role of ECE in the implementation and monitoring of its future sustainable development agenda. They stressed that the ECE has an extensive and diversified work programme which is focused entirely on contributing to sustainable development by means of concrete and results- oriented activities that address the needs of countries of the region and beyond. These activities are carried out in eight broad areas of work or subprogrammes: environment, transport, statistics, economic cooperation and integration, sustainable energy, trade, timber and forestry, and housing, land management and population. ECE's future priorities and activities have been formulated in Commission Decision A (65) which was adopted by unanimity on 11 April 2013 following an intensive two-year intergovernmental consultation process.

3. Member States emphasized that their views expressed in the discussions are not to be interpreted as agreed positions in the ongoing global negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda and do not pre-judge the outcomes of those negotiations.

II. ECE's sectoral activities in promoting sustainable development

4. Much of the discussion focused on ECE's contribution to the promotion of sustainable development and how ECE's activities could assist in the implementation of the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region and beyond. Member States highlighted a number of specific tools and instruments developed by ECE that could provide an important contribution to the implementation of the new development agenda. There was a general consensus on the importance of ECE's sectoral activities in promoting sustainable development; differences expressed in the discussion reflected more subtle distinctions in emphasis regarding the importance of subprogramme activities. The discussion was organized around major areas of ECE programme activities and can be summarized as follows:

5. **Environment:** The ECE manages 5 multilateral environmental agreements and numerous protocols (on water, air, industrial accidents, public access to information, and environmental impact assessment) that set standards and create obligations. Implementation is monitored by regular meetings of the parties and of special implementation committees. Significant technical assistance and capacity-building efforts are undertaken to help member States comply with the agreed standards and policies.

6. Member States highlighted the importance of the ECE Water Convention as a flagship instrument that addresses transboundary water issues in the regional context, as the majority of freshwater resources are transboundary. The Convention obliges Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management.

7. Speakers drew attention to the ongoing work under the Convention on the nexus "water, energy and food" in transboundary basins which shows the importance of linking and implementing SDGs jointly. Its protocol on water and health, on preventing water-borne diseases, was also considered an excellent tool for the implementation of SDGs, linking water management with water supply and sanitation, information and public participation.

8. The ECE Aarhus Convention promotes public participation, access to environmental information and justice. A number of speakers stressed that they considered the involvement of civil society, effective public participation, and transparent and accountable governance as critical for making the post-2015 agenda work. Broad involvement of the public, including in their role as community members, voters, consumers or shareholders, could contribute to better decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes at all levels.

9. The ECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) and its eight protocols tackle cross border air pollution by means of emission standards and other measures, including monitoring and reporting. The importance of the work of the Convention was underscored by references to recent WHO studies indicating that 3.7 million premature deaths worldwide were attributable to poor air quality in 2012 and most occurred in low- and middle-income countries. Air pollution was now understood to be a far more significant public health risk than previously known.

10. The ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development strives for education at all levels that will make children and adults more cognizant and knowledgeable on sustainability issues. It was considered an important tool that would contribute to changing behavioural patterns. The approach of the Strategy was to encourage countries to include ESD in their education systems, in all forms, from primary to tertiary, including vocational and adult learning.

11. Member States noted the importance of ECE's collaboration with the European Environment Agency on the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), a system for sharing vital environmental information to allow policy-makers to take informed decisions that promote sustainable development.

12. **Transport**: The ECE has the overall objective of promoting affordable, safe and clean transport and, for that purpose, it manages fifty-eight international transport agreements. Speakers considered transport as central to economic and social development and a driver for sustainable growth, by providing access to markets and supply chains. Transport was not included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework and might, therefore, not have been seen as a political or financial priority for development policies. Many people still do not have access to affordable, safe and clean transport, and many countries lack efficient and affordable access to world markets. Transport is also one of the key areas in ensuring the shift to sustainable low-carbon societies. By making mobility safer, cleaner and more efficient, the transport sector can meet its full potential in contributing to sustainable development.

13. Some member States highlighted the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP) as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices on integrated approaches to transportation, health and environment issues, focusing on informing, enabling and encouraging policy formulation and action at sub-national and national levels. Its focus on the nexus of transportation, health, and the environment was considered critical for fully understanding the challenges posed by rapid global urbanization – and

accompanying transportation demands – for the environment and human health. THE PEP and its work to promote policies and actions conducive to safe, accessible, low emissions modes of transport was deemed highly relevant to today's urban environment.

14. **Statistics**: Developing the necessary measurement approaches and indicators and creating monitoring mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda was considered essential for the effective implementation of the new development framework. New statistical measures would be needed to complement existing statistics and to capture all relevant dimensions of sustainable development. A key reference in this regard is "The Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development", a publication prepared by ECE in cooperation with OECD and Eurostat. ECE's work on poverty measurement could contribute to improving the international comparability and availability of statistics on povelty and the related metadata. In terms of overall monitoring, a multi-layer monitoring mechanism would need to include a strong regional and subregional component, including the possibility of regional peer reviews. Indicators might need to be tailored to specific regional and national conditions and possibly differentiated by categories of countries.

15. **Economic Cooperation and Integration:** Member States agreed that achieving the SDGs would require forging alliances on equal footing among different partners. They consider Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as an effective instrument for engaging the private sector and mobilizing resources for long-term financing in key sectors for sustainable development, such as infrastructure, health and energy. However, it was critical to, inter alia, develop the most appropriate models of financing through PPPs, monitor the enabling environment, remove the barriers to their development and involve stakeholders such as the business community in meeting the future SDGs.

16. Member States also highlighted ECE's work aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of member States' economies by promoting a knowledge-based innovative economy as well as by facilitating the development of entrepreneurship and the emergence of new enterprises, and improving corporate responsibility. ECE also facilitates the development of effective regulatory policies and corporate governance, including those in the financial sector by promoting public-private partnerships for domestic and foreign investment.

17. **Sustainable Energy:** The ECE has the overall objective of providing access to energy for all in the region and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector. Member States emphasized ECE's concrete and results oriented activities in five main areas:

18. Cleaner electricity production experts are preparing a paper for the UNFCCC on the possible use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) to reduce C02 emissions and look at the efficiency of power plants. Coal mine methane experts are preparing best practices on capturing and using methane from coal mines and coal mine beds so as to reduce leakages and prevent explosions. Natural gas experts are studying the role of gas as a back-up to renewable energy; ways to reduce gas leakages at production sites and across transportation and distribution networks; the use of gas for transport; and the role of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Renewable energy experts are studying ways to provide communities that have no access to energy with access to renewable energy. Experts are drawing up a matrix of measures that Member States could take to significantly improve energy efficiency ("low hanging fruit" measures) and are setting up a "scoreboard" to monitor implementation of those measures. Finally geologists from around the world are discussing the classification of mineral reserves and energy resources including renewable energy.

19. **Trade:** Trade is one of the key drivers for sustainable economic growth. The ECE undertakes comprehensive and results-oriented activities by developing and maintaining effective international trade-related instruments, norms, standards and recommendations, in response to the needs of the global economy. ECE actively contributes in reducing barriers to trade in goods and services through greater implementation of international and ECE norms, standards, instruments and recommendations, especially in trade facilitation.

20. In this regard, some member States drew attention to the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) which is managed jointly by ECE and ESCAP They expressed the view that SPECA served as an efficient and useful results-oriented tool for the promotion of sustainable development at a subregional level. SPECA was addressing crucial issues of regional cooperation taking advantage of international legal instruments, norms, standards and recommendations.

21. Several speakers noted that ECE's trade and transport subprogrammes also addressed the special development needs of Land Locked Developing Countries. Trade opportunities for these countries were limited by inadequate road connections, transit and access to the nearby sea ports. ECE should assist in addressing these issues through its participation at the regional level in the implementation of the outcome document of the Vienna conference on the Almaty Programme of Action in the areas of freedom of transit, trade facilitation and international trade.

22. **Forestry and Timber:** ECE, through its integrated programme of work on forests with FAO, has the overall objective to support member countries and other stakeholders in their efforts to sustainably manage and use forests by providing the best available information; facilitating dialogues and communication; as well as building capacity in the region.

23. Member States underlined that forests and trees are of critical importance for sustainable development. Managing forests well is an effective and universal way to progress towards sustainability. It was essential to step up efforts to manage and use forests so that they provide products and ecosystem services to benefit society in a sustainable way. As a regional contribution in this context, a set of key targets and indicative indicators was developed at an ECE/FAO expert workshop, which stressed the need to integrate the social and cultural benefits, the resilience and ecosystem benefits, and the green economy contribution of forests and trees in the future development framework.

24. In contrast with tropical forests, which face destruction and degradation, boreal and temperate forests are growing and well managed in most countries of the ECE region. However, due attention should be given to addressing deforestation and forest degradation which remain or are reappearing in some areas mainly due to urbanization. Moreover illegal logging and related trade should be addressed, when they occur in the region or are induced through imports from other regions, by developing sustainable pattern of production and consumption.

25. In order for the forest sector to lead the transition towards the green economy in the ECE region, member States have adopted the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the forest Sector in a Green Economy. Their commitment to its implementation, in cooperation with key stakeholders from the private sector and other relevant organizations is a priority for the region.

26. **Housing and Land Managment:** With more than half of the global population and about three quarters of the ECE population living in urban areas, member States emphasized that moving towards sustainable cities would go a long way towards addressing today's challenges. There was limited access to affordable and healthy housing. The housing sector was responsible for a significant share of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides had caused considerable damage to the housing stock. Addressing these challenges would involve supporting green, inclusive, healthy, compact, smart and resilient cities, investment in the housing sector, efficient land use, property registration and a sound financial system, as laid out in the current ECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management.

27. **Population:** Upon the request of the UN General Assembly, ECE provides relevant regional inputs in preparing, implementing and reviewing the UN instruments in the area of population and related social development issues. ECE works on the regional implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and helps prepare ICPD beyond 2014. Member States noted that the increasing share of older persons in society and the decline in the working-age population had become an increasing concern in the ECE region and beyond, with important and far-reaching implications for social security, health care, labour markets and other areas. ECE provides a unique expert platform for formulating recommendations on efficient and comprehensive public policies aimed at addressing the economic impacts of ageing. Inclusion of population dynamics, especially ageing and migration, is essential in the future development agenda.

28. **Gender:** Several speakers emphasized that advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential for achieving sustainable development and therefore need to be an important component of the post-2015 development framework. They highlighted ECE's role as the forum for regional reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action and its contribution to the economic empowerment of women through the exchange of good practices in mainstreaming gender into economic policies in the region.

III. Overall scope of the new post-2015 framework

29. In the course of the discussions it was apparent that there was broad common understanding as to the basic objectives of the post-2015 agenda. The post-2015 agenda should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development and set out a single comprehensive and coherent framework for effective delivery and results at all levels. There should be a proper balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development, both in the focus areas and in the targets. Linkages between different areas should be taken into account so that progress in one area did not come at the expense of setbacks in another.

30. The SDGs should maintain the fundamental parameters laid out in the outcome of the "Rio +20" Conference with its focus on practical actions, concise and comprehensive formulations, aspirational character, and universality and applicability to all countries. In addition, it was important to consider applying the lessons learned from the MDGs and finding ways to integrate them into the SDGs. Once the agenda was agreed, the Regional Commissions would have a role in monitoring and gathering information about the implementation of the SDGs.

31. However, in a few areas member States maintained different views. Some countries felt that it was important to have a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights. They stated that justice, equality and equity, good governance, democracy and the rule of law, empowerment and rights of women and girls and gender equality were essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, and that peace and security were a fundamental development outcome. Others, however, expressed the view that the introduction of these issues would go beyond the political agreements reached at the Rio+20 Conference and that, at the practical level, they could not be transformed into measurable goals, targets and indicators.

32. Other issues raised by some countries included the necessity of having climate change integrated in any post-2015 framework. Some countries noted the need for additional sources for financing of the SDGs and suggested that the broader involvement of other global partners, such as multinational corporations, should be encouraged, and the nature of their cooperation needed to be defined.

33. Member States agreed that the above issues were being discussed in the global negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and that they should therefore not be further debated at the level of ECE.

IV. Key messages for the post-2015/SDG process from the perspective of ECE

Discussion Paper by the secretariat ECE (5 June 2014)

Introduction

34. Background and purpose: A major input from the ECE region to the intergovernmental process for formulating the post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is the outcome of the Regional Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (Istanbul, 7-8 November 2013), which helped formulate the regional priorities across a range of cross-sectoral issues. This Discussion Paper complements the broader Istanbul priorities with more specific considerations emanating from ECE's areas of work. It serves for discussion by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) and, together with a Chair's summary of EXCOM's discussion, will be submitted to UNDESA as an input from the ECE region to the global discussions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF, New York, 30 June to 9 July 2014) and the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), in response to the request to Regional Commissions to provide such inputs.

35. Structure: The paper focuses on a number of issues that are of particular relevance to the ECE region in the post-2015 framework, and where ECE has unique instruments and tools to offer for the transformation to sustainable development, including, in particular: cities, transport, forests, water, population, public participation, education for sustainable development, Public- Private Partnerships, and statistics and measurement. The paper argues that these issues need to be duly incorporated in the SDGs framework in order to arrive at a truly transformative agenda. In addition, it is crucial to take into account the linkages between the different areas in order to make the new framework fully coherent and consistent.

V. Key issues for the integration in the SDG framework from the perspective of ECE

36. While ECE is dealing with a number of globally relevant issues (e.g. sustainable energy), the focus of this paper is on issues for which ECE has developed specific instruments or regional policy goals and targets. Incorporating and explicitly reflecting these issues in the SDGs will help promote sustainable development in the region.

37. Sustainable cities: With more than half of the global population and about three quarters of the ECE population living in urban areas, moving towards sustainable cities will go a long way towards addressing today's challenges. There is limited access to affordable and healthy housing. The housing sector is responsible for a significant share of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides have caused considerable damage to the housing stock. Addressing these challenges will involve supporting green, inclusive, healthy, compact, mart and resilient cities, investment in the housing sector, efficient land use, property registration and a sound financial system, as laid out in the current ECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management. The vital role of housing, urban development and land management should be given due consideration in the SDGs.

38. Transport: Transport is central to economic and social development and a driver for sustainable growth, by providing access to markets and supply chains. In spite of this, it has not been included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework and has, therefore, not been seen as a political or financial priority for development policies. Many people still do not have access to affordable, safe and clean transport, and many countries lack efficient and affordable access to world markets. Transport is also one of the key areas in ensuring the shift to sustainable low-carbon societies. By making mobility safer, cleaner and more efficient, the transport sector can meet its full potential in contributing to sustainable development. It is therefore crucial that transport priorities be reflected in a coherent and comprehensive way within the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. Forests: Forests and trees are of critical importance for sustainable development. Managing forests well is an effective and universal way to progress towards sustainability. It is essential to step up efforts to sustainably use forests so that they provide products and ecosystem services to benefit society. The full integration of the benefits of trees and forests in the SDGs is both desirable and feasible. As a regional contribution in this context, a set of key targets and indicative indicators was developed at an ECE/FAO expert workshop, which stressed the need to integrate the social and cultural benefits, the resilience and ecosystem benefits, and the green economy contribution of forests and trees in the future development framework.

40. Water: Water is fundamental for human development, the environment and the economy. Protecting water resources from over-exploitation and pollution, meeting the needs for safe drinking water, sanitation, energy, agriculture and other uses, tackling water-related disasters and improving water governance are important elements that should be incorporated in a future water SDG. In particular, the experience of the ECE Water Convention suggests that addressing transboundary water issues in the SDGs will be crucial since the majority of freshwater resources, in particular in the ECE region, are transboundary. The Convention obliges Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management.

41. Population: Changes in the growth, structure and geographical distribution of human populations have important environmental, social and economic implications. The increasing share of older persons in society and the decline in the working-age population have become an increasing concern in the ECE region and beyond, with important and far-reaching implications for social security, health care, labour markets and other areas. Inclusion of population dynamics, especially ageing, migration and sexual and reproductive health is thus essential in the future development agenda. However, ageing and migration have so far not received sufficient attention in the global SDG discussions.

42. Participation and education for sustainable development:

- Public participation: The involvement of civil society, effective public participation, and transparent and accountable governance are critical for making the post-2015 agenda work. Broad involvement of the public, including in their role as community members, voters, consumers or shareholders, contributes to better decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes at all levels. Access to information and effective judicial and administrative proceedings are also essential to the promotion of sustainable development. Governance issues should therefore be prominently reflected in the SDGs. The ECE Aarhus Convention is a unique instrument to further these principles by providing twin protection of the environment and human rights and promoting public participation, access to environmental information and justice.

- Education for Sustainable Development: Education at all levels will make children and adults more cognizant and knowledgeable on sustainability issues, and will contribute to changing behavioural patterns. The approach of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is to encourage countries to include ESD into all forms of their education systems from primary to tertiary, including vocational and adult learning. In view of the importance of education and learning to advance sustainability, Education for Sustainable Development should be given higher attention in the process of formulating the SDGs.

43. Public-private partnerships (PPPs): Contributing to achieving the SDGs requires means of implementation and concrete projects. This will require forging alliances on equal footing among different partners. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have the potential to be an effective instrument for engaging the private sector and mobilizing resources for long-term financing in key sectors for sustainable development, such as infrastructure, health and energy. Here it is critical to inter alia develop the most appropriate models of financing through PPPs, monitor the enabling environment, remove the barriers to their development and involve stakeholders such as the business community in meeting the future SDGs.

44. Measurement and statistics: Developing the necessary measurement approaches and indicators and creating monitoring mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda will be essential for the effective implementation of the framework. New measures will be needed to capture all relevant dimensions of sustainable development. A key reference in this regard is "The Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development", a publication prepared in cooperation with OECD and Eurostat. A multi-layer monitoring mechanism will include a strong regional and sub-regional component, in addition to monitoring at the global and national levels, to ensure proper follow-up, for instance through regional peer reviews.

VI. Linkages among the key issues

45. Taking into account the interconnections between different areas is a major challenge in formulating the SDGs. Progress in one area must not come at the expense of setbacks in another. Therefore, an integrated approach in designing and. implementing the post-2015 agenda is needed. For example, policies and programmes in the water sector are inextricably linked to those in the forest, housing and many other sectors. Trends in the water sector can be reinforcing or detrimental to development in other sectors. These repercussions should be captured when formulating goals and targets in order to arrive at a coherent and consistent policy agenda.

VII. Conclusions

46. The key areas referred to in the paper need proper attention within the SDGs. The global goals will likely come with responsibilities for all countries. They will therefore have to be both sufficiently broad in order to capture the ·specific circumstances in different countries and capable of taking into account commonalities among countries, for instance within one (sub-) region.

47. In addition, it will be very important to develop mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, once the SDGs will have been adopted. This is an area in which the regional level is likely to be heavily involved and in which the role of the Regional Commissions will be crucial. Discussions will be needed on what such (sub-)regional monitoring could look like, including how other key stakeholders, such as the private sector and local authorities, could be involved.

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United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review

Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/67/290 and A/RES/61/16) ECLAC in addition to all the other regional commissions have been asked to provide regional inputs High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). Below is a summary of points of convergence among the positions of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries in topics of potential relevance to the 2014 session of the HLPF. The report, *PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BASED ON THE TRILOGY OF EQUALITY*, LC/L.3843 expresses the outcomes of, and the spirit of statements made during regional consultations such as, *The Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Follow-up to the development agenda beyond 2015 and Rio+20* and *The Caribbean Forum: Shaping a Sustainable Development Agenda to Address the Caribbean Reality in the 21st Century, both held in Bogotá, Colombia, March, 2013, The regional consultation of civil society, Performing the future we want in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards a Development Agenda post-2015, April 2013*and various other intergovernmental meetings and seminars held late of 2012 to May 2014 as well in ECLAC publications relevant to the Post-2015 development agenda.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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2. The report has been prepared by the secretariat of ECLAC in accordance with resolution 687(XXXV) The regional dimension of the post-2015 development agenda6, adopted at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission7, whereby the member States request the secretariat to prepare, on the basis of the deliberations at the thirty-fifth session and the content of the document Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future, a report identifying areas of convergence between the countries of the region as it regards the issues to be covered under the post-2015 development agenda8. As part of its analysis, the document also considers the common challenges of Latin America and the Caribbean considered as a middle-income region, vis-à-vis other regions, taking into account the specificities of the Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) and structural gaps within middle-income countries.

3. The report was presented to the government of Peru in compliance with the mandate contained in resolution 687(XXXV)9 in its capacity as Chair of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission, as the contribution of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the intergovernmental negotiation process leading towards the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. This report also considers the other two documents in the trilogy, Time for Equality: Closing Gaps, Opening Trails (2010 and Structural Change for Equality: An Integrated Approach to Development (2012) which contain valuable reflections that can help with identifying content for a Latin American and Caribbean regional post-2015 development agenda.

4. The report, PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BASED ON THE TRILOGY OF EQUALITY, focuses on addressing a number of cross-cutting issues that are of particular relevance to the ECLAC region (total poverty eradication, gender, environmental sustainability, urban development and sustainable cities, sustainable consumption and

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[2] This report is is part of ECLAC's input to the HLPF and AMR

[3] Organized by the Government of Mexico, with the support of ECLAC http://participacionsocial.sre.gob.mx/post2015gdl.php

[4] A list of the events can be found in Annex 2 of the report, *PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BASED ON THE TRILOGY OF EQUALITY*, LC/L.3843

[5] A list of publications and their links can be found in Annex 1 of the report, *PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BASED ON THE TRILOGY OF EQUALITY*, LC/L.3843

[6] Resolutions adopted May 9, 2014 at the Thirty-Fifth session of The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Lima, Peru http://periododesesiones.cepal.org/en/publicacion/resoluciones-aprobadas-en-el-trigesimo-quinto-periodo-de-sesiones

[7] http://periododesesiones.cepal.org/en

[8] Paragraph 1, 687 (XXXV) The regional dimension of the post-2015 development agenda

[9] Paragraph 2, 687 (XXXV) The regional dimension of the post-2015 development agenda

production and issues of special concern for the Caribbean and landlocked countries) the importance of synergies between equality and inclusion (economic, social and environmental inclusion), the means of implementation (innovative financing mechanisms, technology and industrialization, SDGs and the post-2015 global processes, better statistical information for public policy and accountability frameworks) and the drivers of progress towards the post-2015 agenda (planning for sustainable development, the need for an enabling international environment, cooperation for equality, and guidelines for a sustainable development agenda).

5. At the centre of concerns in the Latin American and Caribbean region in relation to the post-2015 development agenda are the persisting challenges of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality. There is an urgent need to continue addressing social and economic inequalities, which have become so large and unsustainable that they contribute to social instability. Countries in the region are striving to advance towards greater equality and poverty eradication within their borders, but the results of these efforts depend to a large extent on the international environment and on a strong international agenda. To achieve sustainable development, the international community must address equality between countries (both developed and developing) and generations, while respecting the principles of sovereignty and common but differentiated responsibilities and considering the particular vulnerabilities and challenges of small island developing States (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), middle income countries (MICs), least developed countries (LDCs) and other countries in special situations.

6. The Latin American and Caribbean countries have been playing an active part in the global effort to forge a post-2015 development agenda. The individual countries have adopted differing stances in some areas, but they are nonetheless in agreement on at least seven points:

(i) The remaining achievement gaps in the Millennium Development Goals must be closed.

(ii) The situation in the region is changing, and there are emerging challenges to be met in such areas as energy, demographics, urbanization, natural disasters and public safety.

(iii) A new development model is needed: **one that is based on structural change for equality and environmental sustainability** and can close existing gaps in production and society.

(iv) The minimum threshold of social well-being has risen, which calls for **an agenda with the principle of equality at its core** and social policies with universal coverage.

(v) Policy and institutions matter, which means tackling key issues in terms of regulation, oversight, financing and governance.

(vi) A greater range of ways of measuring progress is needed, in addition to GDP indicators, in order to inform decision-making in respect of sustainable development paths.

(vii) Efforts have to be made to build a global system of governance for development. This process should provide genuine opportunities for socially participatory decision-making. Priority should be placed on achieving global policy coherence in the areas of sustainable development, fair trade, technology transfer, international financial reform and new financing mechanisms, advocacy of South-South cooperation and the strengthening of mechanisms for encouraging the participation of all members of society.

7. Any model of sustainable development must be underpinned by the principle of equality, enshrined in compacts that require dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders. Institutions are key to achieving structural change with equality: they must produce the agreements and arrangements needed to harmonize change in the production matrix, along with broader equality and environmental sustainability.

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REPORT

ARAB HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AMMAN, 2-4 APRIL 2014

Summary

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and its partners, namely the League of Arab States, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Amman from 2 to 4 April 2014, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Environment of Jordan. The Arab Forum served as a regional preparatory meeting for the second session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in New York, in July 2014. The Arab Forum also included a session focusing on the regional preparations for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review on the theme "Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future".

The Forum attracted a large high-level audience. All stakeholders were represented, including government representatives from the economic, social and environmental spheres; representatives of major groups; United Nations organizations; members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism; experts; and international and regional organizations.

The Forum provided a platform for discussing the following issues:

- Progress made in the Arab region towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and means of accelerating their achievement and sustaining future gains. The Forum reiterated the need for a data revolution and a genuine assessment and critical analysis of the progress made in achieving the Goals, so as to uncover the real factors of success and failure. Regional lessons from the Goals needed to be taken into consideration in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda;
- A proposed set of sustainable development goals for the Arab region, prepared by ESCWA on the basis of the outcomes of regional consultations on the subject, in addition to the key conclusions emanating from the various regional and national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. Comments provided by participants will be taken into consideration in the revised version of the document prior to its dissemination to member States, the League of Arab States and Arab negotiators;

- The proposed Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development that ESCWA and its partners are developing following a request by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment as an update to the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region, and the Arab Regional Roadmap for Green Economy Investment, as the operational arm of the Framework. Comments provided by participants will be taken into consideration in the revised versions of both documents prior to their submission to the League of Arab States;
- Means for implementing sustainable development commitments in the Arab region. It was agreed that true global partnerships and regional mechanisms were needed to finance sustainable development and facilitate technology transfer and capacity-building;
- Future functions and organizational aspects of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development as an important element of the regional institutional framework for sustainable development.

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Introduction

1. The 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals requested the Secretary-General to initiate the development of a post-2015 development agenda. Subsequently, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) agreed to launch an inter-governmental process for the formulation of a single, balanced and comprehensive set of sustainable development goals, universal to all nations, to form the core of the post-2015 development agenda. Rio+20 also agreed to establish the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to provide political leadership and guidance on sustainable development issues and act as a forum for reviewing related commitments and objectives, including the sustainable development goals. The United Nations regional commissions, including the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), were invited by the General Assembly[1] to organize regional forums on sustainable development to contribute to the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

2. Within this context, ESCWA and its partners conducted and participated in a series of consultations with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders throughout 2013 to help distil a regional perspective on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. Notable events included the following:

- Arab regional consultative meeting of civil society organizations on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda (Beirut, 14 March 2013);
- United Nations Development Group Arab Development Forum: Priorities for the Post-2015 Agenda in the Arab Region (Amman, 11 April 2013);
- Consultative session on the sustainable development goals at the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting for the Twentieth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development – Follow-up on Rio+20 (Dubai, 29-30 May 2013);
- Discussions on the sustainable development goals at the Expert Workshop on Updating the Sustainable Development Initiative for the Arab Region (Amman, 28 August 2013);
- Consultations on the development of a green economy investment roadmap as a tool to operationalize sustainable development programmes in the region (Amman, 29-30 August 2013);
- Arab Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals (Gammarth, Tunisia, 18-19 November 2013);
- Post-2015 discussion at the sixth session of the Committee for Women (Kuwait City, 4-5 December 2013);
- Regional Workshop on Youth Empowerment in Post-2015 Agenda (Tunis, 13-14 December 2013).

3. Following the above-mentioned consultations, ESCWA and its partners, namely the League of Arab States, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), organized the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development (Amman, 2-4 April 2014), in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Environment of Jordan. The Arab Forum served as the regional preparatory meeting for the second session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will be held at the next Substantive Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York, in July 2014. The Arab Forum also included a session focusing on the regional preparations for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review, which will also be held at the ECOSOC Substantive Session, on the theme

[1] General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013.

"Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future".

I. OBJECTIVES AND THEMES OF THE ARAB HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4. The Arab Forum builds on the outcomes of the consultative process that ESCWA has been leading in the Arab region, which was instrumental in pushing forward a regional sustainable development agenda. It aimed to discuss the following issues:

(a) Progress made in the Arab region towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and means of accelerating their achievement and sustaining gains in the future;

(b) A proposed set of sustainable development goals for the Arab region,[2] prepared by ESCWA on the basis of the outcomes of regional consultations on the subject, in addition to the key conclusions emanating from various regional and national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda;

(c) The proposed Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development[3] that ESCWA and its partners are developing at the request of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) as an update of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region; and the Arab Regional Roadmap for Green Economy Investment as the operational arm of the Framework;[4]

(d) Means of implementing sustainable development commitments in the Arab region.

II. PARTICIPANTS

5. The Forum attracted a large high-level audience. It was attended by a total of 168 participants, including representatives of the organizing partners, namely ESCWA, the League of Arab States, UNEP and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Environment of Jordan. All seventeen ESCWA member States were represented (87 participants). It should be noted that government representation covered a multitude of ministries, namely foreign affairs, environment, social affairs and social development, planning, international cooperation, water, economy, energy, industry and trade, health, education and municipal affairs. Participation of other stakeholders, including United Nations organizations (27 participants) and major groups (25 participants), was also prominent. United Nations representation included most members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization; the World Health Organization (WHO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Population Fund; the International Labour Organization, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; the United Nations High Commission for Refugees; the United Nations Children's Fund; and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); in addition to the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Regional Commissions New York Office. Furthermore, experts and international and regional organizations, including the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Area, the Global Green Growth Institute attended the Forum and enriched its deliberations. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

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[2] ESCWA, *Sustainable Development Goals: An Arab Regional Perspective* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/1). Available from http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3315/5.pdf.

[3] ESCWA, *Proposal for an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development, 2015-2025* (in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme) (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/5). Available from http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3315/2.pdf.

[4] ESCWA, *A Proposed Framework for a Green Economy Investment Roadmap for the Arab Region* (in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme) (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/4). Available from http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3315/1.pdf.

III. DISCUSSION SUMMARY

6. The Forum was held over five substantive sessions, in addition to the opening and closing sessions. The following two side events were also organized: a meeting for major groups, organized by UN-DESA to help develop a regional civil society perspective on the sustainable development goals; and a panel discussion organized by UNIDO on inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

7. Forum discussions were informed by a number of background papers, which are available, along with other meeting documents and presentations, on the meeting website.[5]

8. The following paragraphs summarize the main points of discussion under each session and side event and the agreed follow-up actions.

A. OPENING SESSION

9. The opening session included statements from the Forum organizers and the Government of Jordan as the host of the event. A keynote address was provided by Prince Hassan bin Talal, in his present capacity as Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.

(a) *Statement by the United Nations Environment Programme*

- The three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are highly and clearly interlinked and need to be assessed and studied through an integrated holistic approach;
- The environment and the poor should be at the core of any future sustainable development agenda. The needs of the poor include employment opportunities and social and environmental security;
- The human welfare of societies requires good governance and management of scarce natural resources. The protection of social and cultural heritage is essential;
- A shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns is urgently needed as is the transition to a green economy. Inequalities must be addressed, including inequality of access to natural resources. Governments have a core role to play in that regard.

(b) *Statement by the League of Arab States*

- The Forum constitutes an important opportunity to review progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab region and develop an Arab position on the sustainable development goals;
- The Forum is also an opportunity to discuss the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development and the Arab Green Economy Investment Roadmap, which the League of Arab States has been developing with ESCWA and other partners to guide action at the regional and national levels in the coming years;
- Participant feedback is vital to enriching both documents prior to their submission at the next special session of CAMRE and subsequently to the Arab Economic and Social Summit in 2015.

(c) *Statement by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*

- The year 2014 is pivotal for development. Efforts at the global, regional and national levels are intensifying to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, while efforts continue to define a development agenda beyond 2015 that will guide sustainable development action at the global level over the short to medium-terms;

[5] www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNUM=3315e.

- In 2013, ESCWA organized a series of consultative meetings at the levels of governments, experts, civil society and United Nations organizations, which contributed to the elaboration of a regional vision and a homogeneous approach to the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals;
- It is critical to bring a strong regional voice to the global level. The importance of good regional preparations for the upcoming Annual Ministerial Review and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development must not be underestimated;
- The sustainable development goals cannot address all development issues relevant to the Arab region. Work on those goals must be complemented by the development of an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development as a regional agenda.

(d) *Statement by the Government of Jordan*

- The world is currently witnessing an escalation of many crises – financial, economic, social, political and humanitarian – which are threatening the sustainability of development;
- Poverty; high illiteracy rates; population increases; high unemployment rates, especially among educated young people; slow economic growth; and increasing debts are all challenges that add to the pressures on scarce natural resources. Increasing food and energy prices have exacerbated those problems and are affecting the capabilities of many Arab countries to achieve their development goals;
- Social and political instability and armed conflict in the region have led to a growing number of refugees in some Arab countries. The refugee crisis puts great pressure on already scarce natural resources. Limited fiscal space is among the chief reasons for the decline in levels of development in the region;
- The efforts undertaken by some Arab countries to implement the principles of green economy and sustainable consumption and production are important and should be encouraged. Meetings such as the Forum provide an opportunity to exchange experiences and enhance cooperation among Arab countries.

(e) *Keynote address by Prince Hassan bin Talal*

- One of the deficiencies of the Millennium Development Goals is that they do not account for quality and equity in achievement. This is flagrant in the case of water, as guaranteed access to water is meaningless without looking at the quality of water, standards in water management and regularity of access. It is essential to embed mechanisms for equity in distribution within any new set of international commitments;
- Sustainable development is not possible without safe and equal access to water and sanitation. We must protect and improve existing water reserves, improve good governance and management of water resources and invest in new technologies to improve water quality. Sound management and informed decision-making based on accurate data and information regarding water is essential;
- There is solid evidence regarding the strategic importance of water to national development and security. Traditional fragmented approaches are neither viable nor helpful. Shared, regional conceptualizations of the water deficit problem and supranational strategies that address the common good, with emphasis on the sustainable management of shared water resources, must be at the fore of future water policy. Strategies of regional cooperation must be developed and agreed in respect to transboundary water resources;
- My vision is for the Arab world to become a thought and innovation leader on water scarcity and to pave the way for job creation, economic opportunities and growth. We therefore must investigate the solution nexus: the innovation-opportunity-sustainability nexus;

- In the Arab region, youth unemployment has reached critical levels – but this phenomenon is especially apparent among young professionals. We need to question the structural and social changes needed to facilitate the empowerment of youth and women beyond education. Without this kind of critical analysis and reflection, the post-2015 process is a missed opportunity;
- There is no Millennium Development Goal for good governance (no target or indicators) although political stability, good governance and strong and effective institutions are critical to development;
- A careful balance must be achieved between sustainable development goals that are realistic but ambitious. If the targets are not affordable and attainable, the result will be disillusionment and inaction. Nevertheless, without objectives to strive for, we risk complacency and the loss of aspirational value;
- There is no Arab roadmap annexed to the Millennium Development Goals. We have to write this roadmap ourselves while embracing the messiness of our development challenges. The interdependence between goals, as embodied for example in the water-energy-environment nexus, must be understood and must inform the roadmap to sustainable development;
- We must go beyond acknowledging the fact that we have regional problems that require regional solutions. There is a need for a dialogue on regional problem analysis and solutions, including how to manage common resources;
- Any post-2015 agenda for the region must respond to the emerging needs and challenges through an integrated approach that combines economic, social and environmental sustainability with the principles of good governance, human rights and equality.

B. Session 1: Overview of the post-2015 and the sustainable development goals processes at the global and regional levels

10. The session addressed some of the overarching challenges to sustainable development in the Arab region. Participants were briefed on the progress of the global post-2015 and sustainable development goals processes and expected next steps. Perspectives were provided on the envisioned role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development as a mechanism for promoting an integrated and balanced approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development at the regional level and providing regional perspectives to the global agenda of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

(a) *Overall challenges to sustainable development in the Arab region*

- Resource and budget allocations for the Arab region are unknown. Development cannot proceed when available resources and the rate of their use are not identified. Transparency, notably in terms of government budget allocations, is a key issue;
- Societies need to consider what levels of individual freedoms and conformity they aspire to through a process of learning how to practice freedom, engrained within the education system. There are economic impacts related to the choices we make in relation to freedoms, including the type of capital that receives the most investments. In the region, investments have focused on developing natural capital and, to a much lesser extent, produced and intangible assets. For example, the largest shares of foreign direct investment go into real estate and mining, rather than manufacturing or services, with very low returns in terms of job creation;
- There is often a trade-off between the achievement of equity and equality and the need to reward individual productivity. Throughout the world, countries have opted for different systems to redistribute benefits. The region needs to embark on a social dialogue to make a collective public choice as to whether equal opportunities or "laissez-faire" is desired. It is equally important to know the ailments that we want to be free from as a society, and the aspirations that we want to be free to achieve.

(b) *Sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda: global context and regional aspirations*

- Several processes have resulted from Rio+20, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Technology Mechanism. Many of these processes are converging in the development of the post-2015 agenda;
- The various regions have provided their inputs into these global processes, each according to their regional priorities. The Arab region needs to make its own contribution to reflect its needs;
- The classic North-South divide is apparent in the formulation process of the sustainable development goals, with the South favouring economic transformations, inclusive growth and social protection, and demanding commitments from the North in terms of means of implementation. As in other political processes, opting for the least common denominator is a real risk for the post-2015 agenda;
- In many instances, the achievement of sustainable development is beyond the capacities of one single country. While action at the national level is the cornerstone of development, regional integration and true global partnerships are a must, and due regard must be made to the Rio+20 principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

(c) *Perspectives on the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development*

- The League of Arab States has gone a long way in its institutional reforms in support of sustainable development, including through the work of the various councils and Arab specialized agencies and by supporting the participation of civil society organizations in its deliberations;
- In relation to the global High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the League of Arab States sees the Arab Forum as a mechanism for promoting governance and building partnerships. At the regional level, the Forum has an important role to play in facilitating the exchange of experiences, reviewing progress in the achievement of sustainable development and the preparation of regional reports that strengthen the science-policy interface. The League of Arab States is ready to coordinate with ESCWA in the organization of future sessions of the Forum;
- The Arab Forum is an important mechanism for the region to influence the global sustainable development processes. It should play a key role in developing a vision for development in the region and catalyzing political commitment for its achievement.

(d) *Follow-up actions*

- The meeting took note of the proposed post-2015 institutional set-up under the ECOSOC. Participants recommended that ESCWA and the League of Arab States coordinate the preparation of a proposal for the regular submission of regional inputs into the High-level Political Forum through their respective regional inter-governmental governance structure (separately or jointly).

C. Session 2: Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future

11. The session supported regional preparations for the global 2014 Annual Ministerial Review. Progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab region was summarized, highlighting lessons learned. A perspective on the future role of the League of Arab States in supporting a new post-2015 agenda was provided, stemming from the League's previous Millennium Development Goals

experience. Challenges facing Arab countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and sustaining gains in the future in a time of conflict and social upheaval were highlighted. Selected member State representatives reflected on their national experiences and presented key messages.

(a) *Progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and lessons learned*

- Based on existing data and reports, the Arab region, on average, has had mixed progress. While the number of poor persons dropped from 5 to 4 million over 15 years, progress is mainly limited to cases of extreme poverty – a review of other levels of poverty shows that there was an increase, notably after 2010. Considerable improvement in education was achieved, notably in terms of gender equality in education, although this has not translated into improvement of women's participation in the workforce. Progress in child mortality and maternal health was also registered. Outside of these areas, most least developed countries in the region have not made much progress. Progress in Palestine was greatly hampered because of the Israeli occupation;
- Millions more in the Arab region now have access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation, even though the rural-urban divide has deepened. The destruction of infrastructure due to conflict has prevented sufficient progress towards the targets of the seventh Millennium Development Goal in some parts of the region;
- There is a need for a genuine assessment and critical analysis of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals that uncovers the real factors of success and failure. Countries, Governments and other development stakeholders must be encouraged to undertake this critical assessment of progress given that substantive change cannot be achieved by accelerating business as usual, but mostly by changing the rules of the game and selecting the factors and dynamics that have greater impact, rather than concentrating on one target;
- Despite important constraints on fiscal space, national efforts for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should be maintained and critical policy interventions must be prioritized to accelerate achievement. For sustainability, progress should be institutionalized and mainstreamed in national or local development plans;
- While the Millennium Development Goals were not framed to encompass the entire development agenda at the national and global levels, they have succeeded in placing key sustainability objectives at the forefront of decision-making in the Arab region. Factors discussed by the participants that constrain the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals include political, governance and cultural factors. Sustainable development can never be achieved without the prevalence of peace and stability. Good governance and respect for human rights are indispensable for an inclusive development agenda, and bad governance represents a major threat to development;
- It is of the utmost importance for future sustainable development goals to be rooted in a solid narrative that provides an encompassing conceptual framework, including issues of governance, peace, security and culture.

(b) *Poverty and hunger*

- Extreme poverty, hunger and undernourishment remain a major challenge in the Arab region, especially in its least developed countries. However, the challenge is not confined to those countries. Gains in reducing poverty were reversed due to political instability and conflicts in a number of middle income countries, and many countries in the region remain vulnerable to food shortages. There is a need to reinforce a positive nexus between natural resource management, poverty and hunger. For example, enhancing water use efficiency and preventing land degradation to improve agricultural production is expected to help address food security challenges in the region;

- Special attention needs to be awarded to the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons so as to secure their basic right to food, but also to the receiving host communities whose economic situation has been severely affected. The global community needs to assume its responsibilities in supporting host countries.

(c) *Adopting progressive social policies and social protection systems*

- The Millennium Development Goal approach in several Arab countries has suffered from a focus on quick fixes and narrow-scale interventions, and has to a large extent neglected the issue of inequality. A comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to development is needed, including the adoption of progressive social policies and protection systems;
- A universal social protection floor that includes all social groups, persons with disabilities and geographical regions is needed as a step towards achieving equal opportunity for all and promoting social justice and good governance. It is also an important mechanism for sustaining development gains in the future. A minimum social protection floor is affordable in most Arab countries given that the cost is often lower than the current cost of subsidies.

(d) *Driving inclusive development and promoting growth with equity*

- While the Arab region has performed relatively well in terms of aggregate economic growth compared to other developing regions, growth has however been mostly confined to the oil sector and to an expanding service sector in low-value added activities. In addition, the majority of citizens have not reaped the benefits of economic growth and distribution of wealth was not inclusive, leading to sub-national inequalities;
- There must be a focus on inclusive growth through a more diversified economic structure and macroeconomic policies must be rethought to achieve this objective. Creation of productive employment is central in this new vision of inclusive growth;
- Any future monitoring framework for economic development should capture sub-national inequalities and target the poorest segments of the population;
- Participation of all segments of society, including persons with disabilities, in development and policy-setting must be institutionalized within a human rights framework.

(e) *Emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment*

- Despite progress in terms of gender parity in education, the region faces major challenges in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. The labour force participation rate is the lowest in the world and female representation in parliaments is lagging behind the rest of the world;
- The post-2015 agenda must put forward concrete goals and targets to achieve real gender equality and women participation at all levels of policy-making. Policy responses by countries must reflect the important spill over effects of gender equality and empowerment on all development objectives, including education, child mortality and economic growth.

(f) *Enhancing the quality of services*

- The Millennium Development Goals focus mainly on the quantitative dimension of development rather than the qualitative dimension and many Arab countries performed well according to the majority of these indicators. For example, improvements in the enrolment rates in many countries in the region was not accompanied by equal improvements in the quality of education. Similarly, access to water, as measured by the Millennium Development Goal indicators improved in a number of Arab countries. However, those indicators did not take into account the quality of water resources or the intermittency of the service.

(g) *New regional partnerships for financing development*

- The global and regional environment for partnership has changed drastically in recent years. The share of the traditional donor countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee is decreasing, and new developmental partnerships are emerging. It is therefore important to forge a new regional partnership for development that brings together a range of different actors including Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and international and regional organizations.

(h) *Measuring progress*

- A true data revolution is needed to facilitate monitoring and evaluation and ensure greater accountability at different levels. There was consensus on the need to double the efforts of the Arab region in strengthening and improving data generation, analysis and dissemination. Innovative tools are needed to measure progress against the goals based on lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals. Success stories from the region include tailoring Millennium Development Goals at the national and sub-national levels by adapting them to the city level and proposing city targets and indicators, for example;
- More efforts should be exerted to reconcile international and national sources of statistics and information. The use of credible national data should be encouraged in assessing progress and preparing national and regional reports, and in the production of practical tools for monitoring at the national and sub-national levels;
- Particular efforts are needed to devise a mechanism to measure progress in the achievement of the eighth Millennium Development Goal, and Arab countries should consider issuing a regional report on gaps in its achievement.

(i) *From global to local*

- In the global-to-local continuum, there is a need to further clarify the accountability framework that underpinned Millennium Development Goal implementation as it might impact post-2015 negotiations and agreements. Meeting participants noted that issues of global trade and global financing, among others, undoubtedly affected progress in attaining the Goals. Going forward, we need to ensure that the sustainability narrative or future goals explicitly consider the following four levels: global, regional, national and local.

(j) *Follow-up actions*

- The meeting recommended that the outputs of the Arab Forum be submitted to the League of Arab States, to the next Ministerial Session of ESCWA (June 2014) and to the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review (July 2014). The Government of Jordan, as host of the event, will participate in the ECOSOC Substantive Session and transmit key messages to the Annual Ministerial Review.

D. SESSION 3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THAT SUPPORT ARAB REGIONAL PRIORITIES

12. The session addressed the issue of young people as a catalyst for sustainable development in the Arab region. The session presented a proposal for a set of sustainable development goals that meet the needs of the Arab region, on the basis of the document "Sustainable Development Goals: An Arab Regional Perspective", prepared by ESCWA. The proposal focused on the regional context; the key principles, priorities and transformational changes needed to achieve sustainable development; provided a critical review of goals proposed by the global community in terms of suitability for the Arab region; and developed

a set of goals and targets that Arab negotiators must promote in the coming period. Two member State representatives (Tunisia and Egypt) participating in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals presented their views based on global progress achieved thus far.

(a) *Young Arabs as a catalyst for sustainable development in the region*

- The Arab region is facing two important transformations: democratic and demographic. Nevertheless, it has yet to reap the benefits of both transformations. Young people have not benefited from the political changes that occurred in several Arab countries and their political participation has not improved because institutional frameworks have not changed. Furthermore, youth unemployment rates in the region are very high, especially among young women, leading to high migration;
- Youth issues should be clearly mainstreamed into future sustainable development goals. The following five themes have surfaced as priorities for young people in the region from crowd-sourcing exercises: education; employment and entrepreneurship; health; peace and security; and participation and governance;
- Efforts must be exerted to halt violent behaviour and addiction to drugs among young people in the region. More research on the reasons behind such phenomena and ways of addressing them is needed.

(b) *An Arab proposal on sustainable development goals*

- The Arab region needs goals that address its challenges and development priorities. The sustainable development goal formulation process is political and its outcomes might or might not coincide with regional priorities. There is therefore a need to give momentum to Arab negotiators to push forward a regional agenda. The paper on sustainable development goals developed by ESCWA attempted to capture the outcomes of regional processes and consultations by proposing a small set of goals that are not necessarily comprehensive, but focus on major regional priorities. The conceptual framework puts human rights and well-being at the core, linking them to sustainable resource use, global commons, governance issues and global partnerships;
- Shortcomings in the Millennium Development Goals are widely acknowledged and should be addressed in the sustainable development goals. Additional challenges include the need to address a broader range of issues that are priorities for the region, while acknowledging that each country will have its own set of priorities and constraints;
- A number of issues were deemed critically important for the region, including peace and security (with a specific target for ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land); good governance; reducing poverty and inequality; and securing water, energy and food. Although the draft version of the ESCWA paper included these issues, a number of participants were of the view that the revised version of the paper should have them as stand-alone goals. In addition, participants recognized and supported the full integration of environment across all goals and targets as well as the mainstreaming of gender and youth;
- It is important to look beyond income poverty at other poverty dimensions, such as access to quality health and education services, unemployment and inequality. There are no global guidelines for addressing inequality, with Governments opting for specific national policy decisions. There is also a need to reconsider the money-metric poverty line of United States dollars ($) 1.25. At this level, poverty in the Arab region amounts to 4 per cent, but if the level is raised to $3, poverty rates increase significantly;
- There is a need for an integrated framework for sustainable development goals that embeds the environment across all goals, rather than in one separate goal. UNEP experts have identified criteria and a methodology for developing interlinked environmental targets;

- The controversy at the global level around the inclusion of goals on peace and security, governance and sustainable consumption and production was recognized. The goal on global partnerships and means of implementation represents a particular challenge, given that it necessitates changes to the rules of partnerships and tackling structural obstacles. Some participants stressed the need to frame goals differently by focusing on enablers, including adequate and transparent public resources, improved productive capacities and social protection;
- Participants found that the ESCWA paper provided a valid narrative and a good proposal for goals that could be built upon. Some issues were found to be missing from the proposal, such as ecosystem services, production capacities, economic growth and diversification, disaster risk reduction, debt relief and sustainable transportation;
- Some participants suggested that more focus should be placed on health issues, including HIV/AIDS, health problems related to pollution and non-communicable diseases. Some participants also pointed out that, unless indicators are provided, some of the targets, such as quality education and effective institutions, remained open to interpretation;
- Participants stressed that the post-2015 development agenda should not be transformed into a mechanism for exerting political pressure on developing countries or imposing conditionality on support;
- It was pointed out that some priorities are region specific and may not necessarily be adopted globally. They would be included in the Arab Strategic Framework on Sustainable Development which is currently under development by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and UNEP.

(c) *Follow-up actions*

- Participants provided important comments and suggestions for the ESCWA paper on sustainable development goals. They were invited to provide written suggestions before 20 April 2014 to be taken into consideration by ESCWA in the preparation of a revised version of the document, prior to its dissemination to Arab negotiators. The revised paper will also be submitted to CAMRE and the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers at their next session in preparation for its submission to the upcoming Arab Economic and Social Development Summit in early 2015.

E. Session 4: Proposal for an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development

13. The session presented the Proposal for an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development, 2015-2025, prepared by ESCWA in cooperation with UNEP and the League of Arab States (Department of Environment, Housing, Water Resources and Sustainable Development) at the request of CAMRE. The Framework is an update of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region and reflects ongoing and emerging challenges and opportunities for the Arab region. The session also discussed the Proposed Framework for a Green Economy Investment Roadmap for the Arab Region, which is considered as one of the operational arms of the Strategic Framework. Experiences from Arab countries and other regions in linking green economy to national sustainable development agendas were also presented.

(a) *Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region: lessons learned*

- The Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region was launched in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a type II initiative and has been implemented in the Arab region over the past 12 years. Several lessons can be learned from this experience, which are documented in the various progress reports prepared by the League of Arab States. While many of the priorities originally included in the Initiative are still relevant today, CAMRE requested that it be updated to take into account emerging challenges and be developed into a new Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development. The Arab experience in developing regional sustainable development indicators is instrumental in that exercise.

(b) *Proposed Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development*

- The preparation of the proposed Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development followed a consultative process with various stakeholders. The main improvements compared to the Sustainable Development Initiative include the addition of emerging priorities such as water, energy and food security; climate change; and green economy. A section on means of implementation was included that highlighted the need to enhance cooperation in the region and find mechanisms for funding relevant programs;
- The Arab Strategic Framework stresses the need to build on existing Arab strategies and action plans (such as those on sustainable consumption and production, water, energy and education) and on existing commitments to global agreements, such as the multilateral environmental agreements, so as to avoid duplication of efforts;
- Green economy represents one of several possible operational arms for the Arab Strategic Framework, and global and regional environments currently provide fertile grounds for green economy. The Framework for a Green Economy Investment Roadmap for the Arab Region, as proposed by ESCWA, is a step in that direction and responds to a CAMRE request to identify the best green economy policies and priorities for the region; the size of the requested investment; and the green financing mechanisms available. The Green Economy Investment Roadmap aims to address gaps in vision, information, resources and enabling environments, and includes a number of components, including a stock-taking report, a green economy policy toolbox, a financing strategy and a capacity-building programme;
- Numerous success stories in green economy exist in various regions of the world and in different sectors that can inspire action in the Arab region. The African Union programme on green economy is a notable example. A major challenge to advance green economy is the development of adequate policies that favour the reallocation of capital in the right direction. The region should benefit from the potential for green technology leap-frogging to improve the environmental performance of its growing industrial base;
- The institutional set-up in support of sustainable development and green economy is very important. In Jordan, for example, the Supreme National Committee on Sustainable Development is co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Environment. This has provided a good potential for cross-government initiatives, such as the green economy scoping study which was completed in 2010;
- Participants found the Arab Strategic Framework to be comprehensive overall. They stressed the need for a convergence of priorities between the Arab proposed sustainable development goals and the Framework. Some participants suggested the addition of issues such as dealing with globalization, tackling HIV/AIDS in line with the Arab AIDS Strategy, geological risk management and access to disaster risk information. A green economy approach to sustainable development must take into account the specificities of each country. More studies were therefore needed at the national level.

(c) *Follow-up actions*

- Participants provided important comments on the Strategic Framework and the Green Economy Investment Roadmap. They were invited to provide written suggestions before 20 April 2014 for consideration by ESCWA in the preparation of a revised version of both documents, to be submitted to the next CAMRE session in preparation for their submission to the next Arab Economic and Social Development Summit in early 2015.

F. Session 5: Means of implementation

14. The session considered the means needed to support the implementation of the new sustainable development agenda in the Arab region. In particular, research and development and technology gaps were discussed, notably in critical sectors like water, energy and food, in addition to domestic and regional resources that could be mobilized to bridge the persistent knowledge gap.

(a) *Technology, research and development*

- There are multiple gaps that need to be bridged in the region, namely digital, technology and knowledge gaps. These gaps exist between countries, within the same country and between generations and could have multiple causes. Numerous tools are available for harnessing technology for development and supporting a knowledge society. The proposed sustainable development goals need a stronger focus on technology, including critical sectoral technologies for the region (e.g. water technologies), and means of exploiting existing traditional knowledge;
- The costs involved in the acquisition of technology in the Arab region are high relative to the outcomes achieved from its use. Technology transfer cannot take place without a supporting scientific research environment and adequate levels of investment. Politicians look for quick returns and therefore do not favour investments in long-term research projects. The private sector is willing to invest in technology transfer if an enabling environment is provided. True global partnerships and regional mechanisms are needed to operationalize technology transfer;
- Research and development in the agricultural sector is of particular importance for the Arab region, given that it is a net importer of food and the largest grain importer worldwide. Research and development can play a positive role in bridging the yield gap by allowing more food production with fewer resources. The challenge of modernizing the agricultural sector requires the use of different technology transfer approaches that benefit rural communities, such as farmer field schools and innovation platforms.

(b) *Water-energy-food nexus*

- Access to drinking water and sanitation is a human right. There are short-term and longer-term solutions to the Arab water crisis, including wastewater treatment and reuse and tackling physical leaks in the distribution network, which sometimes result in the loss of up to 80 per cent of water. Longer term solutions are more difficult, with limited options for increased capacity. The key solution is technology for smarter water use;
- Achieving a positive water-energy-food nexus in the region is possible but requires policy coherence between the three sectors. Technology also plays a key role in ensuring smarter water use, especially technological advancements in desalination and agriculture;
- There should be a consistent approach to the issue of water in the sustainable development goals in the Arab region that should meet the objectives of the Arab Water Strategy, taking into account the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals.

(c) *Follow-up actions*

- Participants agreed that true global partnerships and regional mechanisms were needed to finance sustainable development and facilitate technology transfer. In particular, there was a call to decouple regional and international development financing (Arab Development Banks and international donors) from political positions in the light of tensions in the region. These issues must be reflected in the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development.

IV. MAJOR GROUPS SIDE EVENT

15. A background on current global-level post-2015 processes was provided along with the major groups' positions and reactions to the 19 focus areas developed by the Open Working Group. Participants were informed about the Sustainable Development Goals e-Inventory and the upcoming SD2015 advocacy toolkit prepared by the Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, and examples from the e-Inventory analysis were provided as discussion tools. Participants gathered in small groups to discuss the Open Working Group's focus areas and develop regional priorities, divergences from the major groups' positions and proposals for regional goals and targets. Major group representatives made interventions during the plenary sessions of the Arab Forum that focused on the following:

(a) Gender equality and women empowerment: there was a call for the full implementation of the fundamental rights of women and girls, including access to justice, the elimination of violence against women and girls, a ban on forced underage marriage, access to economic and natural resources and participation in formal employment. Equality between men and women in political, social and economic life and decision-making was emphasized from a social justice perspective;

(b) Youth and children: there was a call for access to quality education; the provision of decent employment for all, including young women; and the promotion of an enabling environment for innovation. Participation of young people in decision-making and their access to information were also highlighted;

(c) Food and agriculture: the food sovereignty principle was emphasized as was the need to help local farmers and producers, not only by developing their productivity but also by increasing the added value of their produce, and giving priority to investments that satisfied local food and nutrition security. There was a call for the development of a common regional strategy to ensure food security, build strategic food reserves to protect against any crises and adopt a unified mechanism for trade. Responsible investments in agriculture that adopted a human rights approach and protected and preserved traditional knowledge needed to be encouraged. Enhancing food security and the right to food in areas suffering from protracted crises should be a top priority.

V. UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION SIDE EVENT ON INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

16. The side event focused on industrialization as a driver of development in the Arab region. The following UNIDO vision for promoting industrialization that is inclusive and sustainable was presented:

(a) Long term development can only be achieved through strong, inclusive and resilient industrial and economic growth that integrates the social and environmental dimensions. The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda calls for a transformation of economies for jobs and inclusive growth and specifies industrialization as an important strategy to achieve this;

(b) The overlap between public and private interests in sustainable development is becoming increasingly clear, and the development and implementation of the post-2015 agenda will require an unprecedented level of partnership between businesses, Governments, civil society and other key stakeholders;

(c) Means for engaging and partnering with the private sector need to consider how businesses can best contribute to global sustainability.

VI. CONCLUDING SESSION

17. The concluding session revisited the functions and organizational aspects of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in light of the overall discussions. Closing remarks by Forum partners followed.

Agenda, functions and organizational aspects of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

- It was stressed that sustainable development cannot be reduced to the environment. Environmental integration should not be carried out in a mechanical way. Instead, an integrated approach to development should be promoted through the Arab Forum. Governmental representation at the Forum should be decided by Governments according to national circumstances. However, it was important to ensure large and balanced participation of representatives from governmental institutions related to the political, financial, economic, social and environmental sectors. Participation of major groups was to be maintained;
- The agenda of the Arab Forum should be flexible and action-oriented to allow it to address emerging issues. Preparations for the Forum at the national level need to be institutionalized and could provide input to the agenda of the Arab Forum. Regional reports on sustainable development could be prepared based on national reports;
- The Arab Forum is seen as an intergovernmental regional platform for promoting an integrated and balanced approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development at the regional level. The Forum should review progress, generate political impetus and launch regional partnerships and actions to advance sustainable development. It should be a catalyst for a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development, providing political leadership grounded in solid science;
- The Forum should be a space where best practices are discussed and solutions are found. It should provide political leadership and recommendations for sustainable development in the Arab region and should follow-up and review progress in implementing Arab sustainable development strategies, frameworks and commitments. Globally, the forum should serve to prepare for meetings and deliberations of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and provide regional perspective to its agenda;
- To match the four year cycle of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, it was proposed that the Arab Forum would be held at the level of Heads of States as part of the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit when the Forum was held at the General Assembly level. That was expected to have positive spill-over effects on the functions of the League of Arab States, by promoting an integrated approach. In other years, the Arab Forum would be held by ESCWA at the ministerial and expert levels.

VII. EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

18. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Forum. A total of 62 participants responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents rated the overall quality of the meeting as high. Most respondents thought the Forum papers prepared by ESCWA as well as the presentations to be of good quality. Respondents commended the clarity of the meeting objectives while many thought that it met its objectives and provided a good opportunity for networking and experience sharing among experts. When asked about the need for follow-up regarding the results of the meeting, most of the respondents were positive. In view of the importance of the topic, participants requested to maintain momentum by finalizing the regional sustainable development goals proposal and the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development, taking into consideration the comments of member States. Proposals to address national and regional mechanisms of implementation and follow-up were also raised.

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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Summary

In response to the General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/67/290 and A/RES/61/16), the Regional Commissions have been asked to provide regional inputs to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Asia and the Pacific region has been holding regional and sub-regional consultations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda since 2012. Together with the Asian Development Bank and UNDP it held a series of sub-regional and regional consultations that resulted in the publication of the *Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2012/13 Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda.* The government of Thailand, in partnership with ESCAP also convened the "Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From MDGs to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015" in August of 2013. The Ministerial Dialogue adopted the Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015. This consultative process culminated in the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) which was held 19-21 May 2014 in Pattaya, Thailand.

The English version of the report including the Chair's Summary and two annexes (E/ESCAP/FSD/2) is enclosed below.

Please recycle

1. The Asia and the Pacific region has been holding regional and sub-regional consultations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda since 2012. Together with the Asian Development Bank and UNDP it held a series of sub-regional and regional consultations that resulted in the publication of the *Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2012/13 Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda.* The government of Thailand, in partnership with ESCAP also convened the "Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From MDGs to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015" in August of 2013. The Ministerial Dialogue adopted the Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

2. This consultative process culminated in the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) which was held 19-21 May 2014 in Pattaya, Thailand as the inaugural regional process for HLPF. Through these consultations several overarching priorities and concerns for the Post-2015 Development Agenda have emerged. These priority areas included eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality; pursuing sustained and inclusive economic growth; gender equality and women's empowerment; building resilience to multiple shocks; responding to population dynamics and urbanization; enhancing resource efficiency and natural resource management; deepening regional integration and connectivity while recognizing the sustainable development priorities of ESCAP sub-regions.

3. The consultations emphasized the need for greater attention to region-specific priorities including, among others, disaster risk reduction, addressing vulnerability of small island developing states, urbanization, and employment generation, particularly for the youth. The Forum pointed out that these unique regional priorities need to be further highlighted in the global deliberations of OWG and HLPF.

4. Critical issues related to the Means of Implementation (MOI); including financing for sustainable development; Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI); trade; financing for development, capacity building; partnerships and governance for a transformation towards sustainable development were also discussed. In this context, participants of the APFSD encouraged ESCAP to strengthen its programmes in these areas, for example, through establishing a new Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation and a Committee on Financing for Development; monitoring; evaluating and reporting the progress in the implementation of the SDGs; collaborating with UN agencies, academia and key stakeholders in establishing a New Knowledge Platform; further supporting regional cooperation and integration; and providing coherent policy advice.

5. For the future regional process on the HLPF, the Forum recommended that *inter alia*, subsequent APFSD sessions should be convened so as to maximize synergy with ESCAP Commission sessions, and may be supplemented by regular subregional consultations to be conducted in collaboration with relevant subregional organizations. It should then facilitate political commitment and ownership over the process, develop a regional voice on common priorities, share experiences among countries, engage stakeholders, promote solidarity and universality, promote a stronger science-policy interface, and function as a mechanism for ensuring accountability.

6. For detailed reports on the Asia Pacific Forum please refer to the following links:

Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, 19 May 2014 - 21 May 2014, Pattaya, Thailand
http://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd/

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, 26 Aug 2013 - 28 Aug 2013, Bangkok, Thailand
http://apmd2013.unescap.org

Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2012/13 Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda (including the outcomes of the sub regional consultations carried out together with ADB and UNDP) http://www.unescap.org/resources/asia-pacific-regional-mdg-report-201213-asia-pacific-aspirations-perspectives-post-2015

United Nations E/ESCAP/FSD/2

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Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Pattaya, Thailand, 19-21 May 2014

Chair's summary

Overview

1. The inaugural Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of Thailand in Pattaya, Thailand, from 19 to 21 May 2014. The Forum benefitted from the success of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, held in Bangkok, from 26 to 28 August 2013.

2. The Forum was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Bektas Mukhametjanov, Vice Minister of Environment and Water Resources (Kazakhstan), and Mrs. Kanchana Patarachoke, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Thailand), and attended by more than 260 participants, including representatives of Governments, major groups and other stakeholder organizations and entities within the United Nations system.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following ESCAP members: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan, Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru, Nepal; Pakistan, Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan, Thailand; Turkey; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

4. Over the course of the three-day meeting, participants discussed Asia-Pacific perspectives on sustainable development, including regional priorities and challenges. As part of the Forum, a preparatory session for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council was organized to provide the region's perspectives on the theme "Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future".

5. In the five other sessions held over the three days, the following issues were discussed: integration and transformation for sustainable development; shared prosperity within planetary boundaries; means of implementation, including financing, technology and global partnerships; the way forward: shaping an effective and dynamic regional process for sustainable development; and the rule of law in the development agenda beyond 2015.

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Formal statements were also delivered by delegates. A preparatory event, the "Asia-Pacific Civil Society Forum on Sustainable Development", was also organized by ESCAP in collaboration with Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, in Bangkok, from 15 to 17 May 2014.

6. Participants agreed that the Chair's Summary be brought to the attention of the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York in July 2014, as an input to its deliberations at the global level.

The need for regional transformations

7. Participants called for enhanced regional political commitment and leadership. They recommended that the APFSD platform provide an important high-level mechanism for the Asia-Pacific region in realizing sustainable development and in bringing forward regional and national voices and perspectives to global efforts.

8. Through their deliberations, participants at the Asia-Pacific Forum made specific recommendations for the attention of the regional and international community, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The Asia-Pacific Forum identified several overarching priorities and concerns for the development agenda beyond 2015

9. Participants generally agreed, among other things, on the seven priority areas identified in the note by the secretariat, entitled "Fostering sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific", namely: eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality; pursuing sustained and inclusive economic growth; gender equality and women's empowerment; building resilience to multiple shocks; responding to population dynamics and urbanization; enhancing resource efficiency and natural resource management; deepening regional integration and connectivity while recognizing the sustainable development priorities of the ESCAP subregions and reflecting critical issues related to the means of implementation inclusive of financing, science, technology and innovation, trade and capacity-building. Participants called for a strengthened global partnership for a transformation towards sustainable development.

10. At the Asia-Pacific Forum, it was emphasized that economic growth had resulted in significant gains for the region, and it was stressed that the development agenda beyond 2015 must create conditions for robust, sustained and inclusive economic growth in developing countries. However, there was increasing recognition of the limitations of current models of development. To realize development aspirations, emphasis needed to be placed on inclusive, balanced and sustained growth, while respecting planetary boundaries.

11. Participants recognized the urgent need for integrated approaches that would lead to a more sustainable and inclusive development paradigm and synergize the three dimensions of sustainable development. Strategies for implementation identified by member States included: building a low-carbon society; resource productivity; food security through sustainable agriculture; education for sustainable development; integrated water resources management, resilience and green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, including strategies to address inequality. Civil society particularly highlighted addressing ecological sustainability, and that universal health coverage should address sexual and reproductive health rights without discrimination of any kind.

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12. Participants called for a final push for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially with regard to poverty eradication, which must remain the central and overarching objective of the development agenda beyond 2015. Participants acknowledged both the achievements and shortcomings in progress in several areas. In that regard, the global importance attached to such issues as access to sustainable modern energy services, provision of universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, especially for women and girls, was re-emphasized, among others.

13. Several other social development priorities of the development agenda beyond 2015 were noted. Those included: addressing inequalities in income, opportunity and power; tackling the root causes of violence against women; integrating youth into the labour market and facilitating the school-to-work transition; improving food security through sustainable agriculture; promoting integrated resources management; managing migration to ensure that it becomes an enabler of sustainable development; implementing nationally appropriate social protection measures and providing decent work for all; ensuring universal access to public services, especially to good-quality education; universal health coverage; skill development to foster decent jobs and economic opportunities; and the need for responsive and accountable institutions that enable all people to organize and participate in civic and political life.

14. Many participants emphasized the need for the development agenda beyond 2015 to adhere to the principles of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. At the global level, several delegations emphasized the application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and its application to all or many aspects of the development agenda beyond 2015. At the same time, the view was also expressed that the principle should be applied only to global environmental issues.

Regional priorities calling for special attention

15. It was highlighted at the Asia-Pacific Forum that there was a need for greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction and preparedness in the development agenda beyond 2015. Building resilience to natural disasters was agreed as an urgent regional priority to avoid reversal of development gains. It was underscored that disaster risk reduction and preparedness was not being addressed sufficiently in the ongoing processes of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting was of the view that that issue should be included in the development agenda beyond 2015.

16. Delegates emphasized that climate change, with detrimental impacts, particularly on small island States and other climate-vulnerable countries in Asia and the Pacific, had emerged as a new challenge for the region, requiring priority attention in the development agenda beyond 2015.

17. Delegates further highlighted the importance of sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting issue, and strong support was expressed for the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns as a global cooperation framework, with developed countries taking the lead.

18. In considering the strong linkage between migration and development in the Asia-Pacific region, greater attention also needed to be given to the needs of migrant workers and their families.

19. It was emphasized at the Asia-Pacific Forum that regional economic integration was critical to accelerating economic growth since it would help reduce poverty and economic disparities, and thus was instrumental in the achievement of sustainable development. It was noted that the main challenges in deepening regional integration were weak connectivity, both hard and soft connectivity, including regulatory barriers to the movement of goods, services, people and capital. Efforts should be targeted on how to improve connectivity for deeper regional integration in the most economically, environmentally and socially inclusive way.

20. Affordable access to information and communications technology (ICT) was recognized as an important driver for achieving sustainable development goals, and regional and international forms of cooperation were highlighted as crucial aspects of enhancing connectivity. It was also recognized that Asia and the Pacific comprised the most digitally divided region in the world, and that there was a need to address the digital divide within the development agenda beyond 2015 process. Small island developing States called for support for ICT and databases for enhancing their institutional capacities.

21. The importance of transport development in the region was highlighted. There was a suggestion to consider transport issues as a stand-alone cluster in forging the list of sustainable development goals. Also, special attention should be given to promoting road safety in the region. Access to energy was mentioned as one of the crucial issues in achieving sustainable development in the region. It was emphasized that there was a need to accord priority to energy in the development agenda beyond 2015 and in sustainable development goals. It was recommended that substantial attention be given to regional infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization.

22. The meeting recognized health as a vital element of future sustainable development goals and a priority for the region. In that context, there was a call for stronger emphasis on combating non-communicable diseases.

23. The issue of respect for the rule of law was considered by a number of participants as a prerequisite for success in achieving sustainable development in the region. Certain delegations did not support broad interpretation of the concept of sustainable development in a way that included elements, such as the rule of law, peace and security, and human security, as individual concepts or in the form of a so-called fourth dimension of sustainable development.

24. The requirements of groups with specific needs, including women and girls, older persons, youth and persons with disabilities, and, as highlighted by civil society, of farmers, fisherfolk, migrants and indigenous peoples, should be given greater priority in the development agenda beyond 2015. Civil society advocated a stand-alone sustainable development goal for reducing inequality and equality targets across all focus areas and means of implementation.

Means of implementation

25. Participants emphasized the importance of a strengthened global partnership for development and adequate means of implementation to enable developing countries to implement the development agenda beyond 2015. Participants called for a stronger emphasis on science, technology and innovation and innovative mobilization of resources. Means of implementation should be equally devoted to all three dimensions of sustainable development, and progress should be quantifiable.

26. The means of implementation should match the ambition and comprehensive scope of the sustainable development goals, and be backed by effective accountability and monitoring frameworks.

27. It was also emphasized by the Asia-Pacific Forum that effective national governance was critically important in realizing implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015. The importance of civil registration and vital statistics systems for planning development strategies and monitoring development outcomes was underscored by a number of delegations. Universal civil registration was recognized by certain delegations as a critical means for all people to have a legal identity and as such to be able to participate actively in economic and political activities, and access essential services.

28. Delegates recognized that trade, technology and finance were essential means of implementation of sustainable development goals. In that regard, a rule-based and equitable multilateral trading system that ensured effective market access of products and services was critical. The need for an early conclusion of the Doha Development Round was underscored.

29. It was emphasized by the Asia-Pacific Forum that the private sector was a critical contributor, and the active engagement of the private sector was important in all efforts to achieve sustainable development.

30. It was further emphasized that the development agenda beyond 2015 should be supported by new and additional development financing. That could be realized through increasing new, predictable and additional resources generated from and leveraged through innovative systems. Strategic forms of development cooperation and partnership should be institutionalized. Broadening the depth and reach of financial systems was critical for improved access and inclusion, reducing social inequality and efficiency. Institutional investor funds for meeting long-term financing requirements of infrastructure and climate change mitigation and adaptation were viewed as critical. While some delegations focused on new and innovative mechanisms, including domestic resource mobilization, the importance of continued and enhanced official development assistance (ODA) to support developing countries was emphasized, and there was a strong call for developed countries to urgently fulfil their ODA commitments.

31. Reform of global governance was highlighted, including giving real voice and participation to developing countries. Some highlighted that global partnerships should be equitable, inclusive with mutual accountability and fair sharing of responsibilities. Developed countries should undertake concrete and measurable obligations, including supporting the efforts of developing countries with enhanced financial and technological assistance.

32. The development agenda beyond 2015 should be universal and focused on integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, adopt a rights-based approach and be people-centred. Development approaches that were unique to the region were recognized, including the "sufficiency economy philosophy" and the pursuit of happiness.

33. *The establishment of measurable goals and targets that captured the* multidimensional nature of sustainable development was underlined as a key challenge, as were the efforts needed to monitor progress towards related targets. Timely and reliable disaggregated statistics were a prerequisite for evidence-based decision-making and accountability of public institutions, including disaggregated data for monitoring inequality and relative gains for women, low-income households and other marginalized groups. Delegates stressed the need to strengthen capacities of national statistical systems and

take advantage of the opportunities presented by the data revolution for strengthened accountability and a strong monitoring framework.

Regional strategies and actions for development agenda beyond 2015

34. The participants in the Asia-Pacific Forum deliberated on the future modality and role of APFSD in supporting the development agenda beyond 2015. Among the views expressed were that APFSD should be ambitious but pragmatic, and facilitate political commitment and ownership of the process. It should: provide a regional voice on common priorities; share experiences among countries; engage stakeholders; promote integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, solidarity and universality and a stronger science-policy interface; function as a mechanism for ensuring accountability and sharing of best practices; and the delivery of means of implementation to developing countries.

35. The Asia-Pacific Forum should also support the development of a regional road map, subsequent to the finalization of the sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015. Such a road map could include means of implementation, stakeholders' roles and partnerships, and link national, subregional, regional and global processes and commitments. A road map should also be developed through an intergovernmental process with possible inputs by all other stakeholders, with the final decision by member States.

36. The Asia-Pacific Forum recommended the following actions in relation to sustainable development and the regional process for the high-level political forum on sustainable development, subject to further intergovernmental consultations, as appropriate:

(a) APFSD should seek guidance and be in synchronization with the mandate outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the high-level political forum;

(b) The establishment of centres of excellence for sharing knowledge and information;

(c) The facilitation of subregional consultations and processes to support regional deliberations and eventual implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015;

ESCAP encouraged to position itself to deal with means of implementation

(d) Establishment of a new committee on science, technology and innovation and a committee on financing for development;

(e) Lead in assessing progress in implementation of sustainable development goals, taking into account subregional realities and collaborating with the United Nations system for monitoring, evaluating and reporting;

(f) Facilitate the establishment of a new knowledge platform, inclusive of United Nations agencies, academia and key stakeholders;

(g) Further support regional cooperation and integration, and provide coherent policy advice. That would include evaluation of the barriers to achievement of the sustainable development goals;

For future regional process regarding the high-level political forum

(h) Future sessions of APFSD beyond 2015 might benefit from ESCAP collating the annual national reporting on sustainable development

progress. In that regard, small island developing States called for a regional report that would synthesize national sustainable development plans to ensure coherence and consistency of sustainable development frameworks;

(i) APFSD should be arranged in consideration of the most effective modality, which might include a stand-alone or back-to-back meeting with ESCAP Commission sessions. In that regard, consultations with subregional groupings should be a regular feature of APFSD, and such consultations should take into account the work of subregional organizations;

(j) The future architecture of APFSD, including its mandate, scope of work and other procedural aspects of the Forum, should be determined through an intergovernmental consultative process, within the broad framework of General Assembly resolution 67/290;

(k) Stakeholders might contribute to the work of APFSD, while the Forum should keep its intergovernmental character, as in the high-level political forum;

(l) Interpretation during APFSD for the official United Nations languages used by ESCAP was also requested;

Civil society recommendations

(m) On monitoring and assessment, proposals included: multi-stakeholder regional and subregional level peer review mechanisms to evaluate performance on sustainable development goals; special rapporteurs on key sustainable development issues; and accountability and reporting mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in financing sustainable development, including United Nations agencies, international financial and trade institutions, transnational corporations and the private sector;

(n) To facilitate and institutionalize civil society participation in development processes, members of the high-level political forum and the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, and Governments should: recognize civil society's capacity to contribute to constructive development; ensure that civil society engaged as partners with equal rights in policy development, implementation, monitoring and accountability in all regional and global mechanisms, including APFSD and the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and institutionalize civil society participation in sustainable development processes through a regional civil society engagement mechanism designed by civil society.

37. The participants expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government of Thailand for its generosity and warm hospitality in successfully hosting the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, including furnishing generous support for holding of events for civil society organizations during the Forum.

ANNEX 1

Preparatory Session for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council: Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future

1. The preparatory session for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the theme "Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining gains in the future" was organized as a high-level panel discussion to provide perspectives from the Asia- Pacific region, particularly from the region's least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States(SIDS). Mr. Navid Hanif, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, served as moderator of the panel. The panel discussed policies and institutional arrangements that have helped to accelerate progress towards the MDGs in countries of the region; on-going and emerging challenges in meeting the MDGs and sustaining development gains; and recommendations for practical approaches to sustaining development gains in a future development agenda.

2. Mrs. Kanchana Patarachoke, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, pointed out that there had been continuous political commitment in Thailand to achieve the MDGs. Despite meeting many of the MDGs, as well as prospects for achieving several targets of the MDGs Plus, the country still faces challenges. She noted the persistent inequality of access and opportunities across geographical regions; emerging patterns of obesity while malnutrition persists in remote areas; increased rate of teenage pregnancy; and the need to improve energy efficiency and address environmental challenges. Key strategies that have helped Thailand to accelerate progress towards the MDGs were highlighted, including: investment in human capital and people-centred development guided by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP); multi-stakeholder engagement, including the recognition of the key role played by the private sector and CSOs in promoting development; and investment in the future through programmes such as the universal health

coverage scheme. Also emphasized was the importance of South-South cooperation in which Thailand has been actively engaged through the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA).

3. H.E. Mr. Som Lal Subedi, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal, emphasized the importance of political stability and absence of conflict for pursuing the MDGs. He noted that the MDGs were integrated into Nepal's planning framework and the country could reach many of the goals by 2015. However, key challenges remained, including: low private investment and job generation; harnessing remittances for development; food security; reducing barriers for accessing education; and reducing infant mortality. Emerging challenges such as climate change may threaten development gains, and rapid urbanization may put additional pressure on the provision of access to clean water and basic sanitation.

4. H.E. Mr. Vahram Kazhoyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Director of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenia, emphasized that the MDGs and sustainability concerns have to converge for accelerating development gains post-2015. He noted that, in Armenia, the government, the United Nations and civil society had adapted the MDGs to the country's context, which enhanced national ownership over the MDGs and facilitated their integration in the main national development policies and strategies. Yet, the global financial crisis, the influx of refugee families from neighboring conflicts, and structural challenges related to being a landlocked country with limited access to international trade and transport routes had hampered progress towards the MDGs.

5. Mr. Samuel Grundler, Director of Aid Management, Ministry of Finance, Nauru, noted that smallness and isolation of Pacific Island developing states resulted in high costs in transport, service delivery and production, as well as vulnerability to economic and environmental risks. As a consequence, the majority of these countries would not reach many of the MDGs by 2015. There was an emerging consensus that Pacific small island states would be severely affected by climate change. Social inclusion was a key priority for the sub-region, especially in terms of addressing income inequality, gender inequality, and dealing with

health challenges, in particular non-communicable diseases. The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be convened in Samoa in September 2014, will address the ways to sustain efforts towards sustainable development, including stronger partnerships for development, tailoring internationally agreed development goals to national contexts, and better monitoring and reporting.

6. During the open discussion, consensus emerged that fundamental reasons for slow progress in a number of countries towards achieving some of the MDGs included poor cross-sectoral coordination, low awareness of sustainability issues, and weak governance. Development cooperation and the MDG 8 were also discussed and several participants were of the view that if poorer countries had received the support promised by development partners, then greater progress could have been made. Others argued that most of the global agenda was under-funded, *or* had not been funded, and that global and trans-boundary issues required international financial coordination and the commitment of development partners. Both Government and civil society representatives supported the view that the private sector had an important role to play in achieving the MDGs and in formulating and implementing the SDGs and, that therefore, there should be targeted policies and fiscal incentives to direct private investment towards supporting sustainable growth and corporate social and environmental accountability. Participants also highlighted the need for fair trade, the importance of aid for trade, and the advantages of rule-based multilateral trading systems to advance global and regional trade. Also highlighted was the need to develop a coherent framework that could provide an interface between the science of sustainability and policy making, as well as the need to promote resource efficiency and the decoupling of growth from resource use and pollution. Participants also emphasized the importance of regional economic cooperation and integration in the context of South-South cooperation to mobilize investment, to enhance productive capacity and trade, to provision regional public goods, and to address shared vulnerability. These were issues of vital importance for LDCs and LLDCs.

7. The following key messages emerged from the high-level panel discussion as regional inputs to the 2014 AMR:

- The Asia-Pacific region had made great progress towards achieving the MDGs, particularly in reducing the proportion of people living in poverty, but progress had been uneven within and across countries.
- Even in countries that had experienced progress in achieving the MDGs, the levels of disparities and deprivation remained very high. There would be a significant "unfinished agenda" after the target date of 2015.
- Persistent inequalities in the region suggest that market-led growth alone is not enough to achieve sustainable development. Governments were encouraged to take steps to: strengthen human rights, the rule of law, open and accountable institutions, and social protection; create decent and productive work for all; promote non-discriminatory political, legal and socio-cultural norms based on gender, ethnicity, race, and language; and prevent over-exploitation of natural resources.
- In terms of setting regional priorities for sustainable development for the post-2015 development agenda, it was emphasized that universal access to quality education and health services should be a priority for the Asian and Pacific region, particularly in the context of reducing poverty and inequalities. Disaster risk reduction was also a common and critical challenge of the region, which should be adequately addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Countries of the region also face many emerging challenges including youth unemployment and low job creation, rapid urbanization, and access to clean water and basic sanitation. Climate change and environmental pressures such as pollution and water scarcity also need to be adequately addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Political commitment, national ownership, capacity building, political stability and absence of conflict, integrated policy and cross-sectoral approaches were considered instrumental factors to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and provided lessons for the post-2015 agenda.
- Development cooperation is essential, but it should go beyond ODA and include facilitating more intra- and inter-regional trade, building regional infrastructure, facilitating mutually beneficial flows of labour, technology transfer, and promoting regional flows of investments.

- Regional economic cooperation and integration, with special support measures for LDCs and LLDCs, should be a critical element in South-South cooperation towards sustainable development.
- The private sector is a critical component of the sustainable development framework and should therefore be actively engaged in all efforts to achieve sustainable development.
- Also essential was the societal shift of consumption patterns and production structures towards a more sustainable path of development.

ANNEX 2

(27.06.2014)

The report of the discussions

1. Welcome remarks were made by Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP and an opening statement was delivered by H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. A video message from Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations was also delivered.

2. In her opening statement Ms. Akhtar noted that the meeting provided an opportunity to define regional priorities and build consensus in order to shape and implement the global development agenda beyond 2015. This involved continuity in building upon regional MDG achievements, as well as agreement on future commitments in the form of the SDGs. Ms. Akhtar further emphasized that the regional process must engage all stakeholders in order to ensure strong ownership.

3. Ms. Akhtar noted the role of ESCAP and the United Nations system in supporting the advancement of the post-2015 development agenda process, and the formulation of the SDGs. The Executive Secretary reiterated that sustainable development was at the heart of the ESCAP mandate. In the formation of the SDGs, Ms Akhtar called for both a comprehensive and a flexible approach, as it is important to capture subregional perspectives and priorities at the same time as supporting regional and global commitments. A clearer discussion was required on shared accountability and monitoring mechanisms, including stewardship on means of implementation (MOI) for development cooperation which balanced the three dimensions of sustainable development.

4. In his opening statement, H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow recalled the Royal Thai Government's initiative to jointly organize with ESCAP the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 (APMD) in Bangkok from 26-28 August, 2013. The Permanent Secretary expressed hope that, built upon the APMD, outcomes of the inaugural Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development would contribute substantively to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development and advance the global process to formulate the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow called for a redoubling of efforts to achieve the MDGs, and outlined emerging challenges faced by Asia and the Pacific, including rising inequality, unplanned urbanization, youth unemployment, aging societies, climate change, environmental degradation as well as food energy and water security. H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow highlighted key areas that deserve to be among Asia-Pacific priorities for the post-2015 development agenda including: poverty eradication; inequality; disaster risk reduction and preparedness; better access to quality health care; universal health coverage (UHC); greater regional integration and connectivity; and promotion of regional cooperation frameworks such as ASEAN. The Permanent Secretary emphasized the importance of means of implementation including science, technology and innovation (STI), addressing the digital divide, innovative means to mobilize financial resources and strengthening global partnership

for sustainable development and that ESCAP could play a constructive role in assisting member States to gain better access to these means of implementation. H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow also emphasized that the post-2015 development agenda must take into account the special needs and interests of developing countries, especially LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. The advancement of civil liberty, individual freedom, democracy and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms were noted as essential for sustainable development, and this interrelationship should be considered in the post-2015 development agenda.

5. In his address to the meeting Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that the success of the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda would depend greatly on the effectiveness of regional processes. Mr. Eliasson emphasized that a strong framework for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region was essential for the achievement of global goals. While it was important to recognize the considerable achievements in regional MDG attainment, there was an urgent need to focus more clearly on inequality and disparities. In support of the future development agenda, Mr. Eliasson noted that there was a need for more reliable and disaggregated data as well as a clearer focus on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

6. Following the welcoming and opening addresses and during subsequent sessions the meeting agreed on the Bureau as follows:

Co-Chairs:

Kazakhstan: H.E. Mr. Bektas Mukhametjanov, Vice-Minister of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and

Thailand: Mrs. Kanchana Patarachoke, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

Vice-Chairs

Armenia: H.E. Mr. Vahram KAZHOYAN, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Director of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Secretary General of the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO, Head of the Inter-agency Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Bangladesh: H.E. Mr Mofazzal Hossein Chowdhury Maya, Minister for the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

Japan: H.E. Ms Tomoko Ukishima, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Environment.

Sri Lanka: H.E. Prof. Tissa Vitarana, Senior Minister for Scientific Affairs

Mongolia: H.E. Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Minister of Environment and Green Development,

Nepal: H.E. Dr. Som Lal Subedi, Vice Chair a.i., National Planning Commission

7. The meeting then adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Asia-Pacific perspectives on sustainable development, including sustainable development goals:
   (a) Overview of sustainable development priorities and challenges, including presentations for the Annual Ministerial Review of the

Economic and Social Council;

(b) Transformation for sustainable development: integration, shared prosperity within environmental limits and means of implementation:

5. The way forward: shaping an effective and dynamic regional process for sustainable development.
6. Other matters.
7. Review of the Chair's summary.
8. Closing of the Forum.

Overview Session: Regional Perspectives on Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Charting the Way for an Ambitious Post-2015 Development Agenda, Including the Sustainable Development Goals

8. In her opening presentation Ms. Akhtar restated that the region still had much to do to meet remaining MDGs commitments. While there was some level of convergence and common elements between the MDGs and SDGs, such as poverty eradication, there were also important differences, including subregional priorities. The identification of these differences, and their recognition at the global level was an important outcome for this meeting.

9. While it is recognized that economic growth is still important for the region, this growth needs to be more inclusive. The region's development also needs to be more resilient. The Asia-Pacific region faces the prospect of 'development at risk' from multiple shocks, especially natural disasters. These shocks have the potential to roll back development gains. Managing such risk should be seen as an investment in future development, rather than a cost. The region's population dynamics, whether represented by large youth populations, rural-urban transformations or rapidly ageing societies, provides important challenges. These must be better understood and responded to if countries are to take advantage of both the demographic dividend and minimize the challenges of rapid demographic transition. Finally, there is an urgent need to decouple growth from resource and carbon-intensive economic systems.

10. Ms. Akhtar further noted that while the region had achieved a great deal in terms of development goals, the fragility of these attainments should be recognized. While extreme poverty has been significantly reduced, a large number of people in the region still live on two dollars a day or less. Inequality in the region has also become more pronounced, and is widening alongside economic growth. The region's migrants, those earning a livelihood in the informal sector, youth and other marginalized groups were particularly vulnerable as they were least likely to be covered by social protection systems.

11. The region's economic transformation has not resulted in concurrent employment opportunities, for example, as exemplified by the continued dependence on the informal sector for employment creation – especially for women and youth. Despite high and enduring economic growth in the region, a number of inequalities persist, and in some instances have intensified, between women and men, girls and boys, between and within urban and rural areas, and among different caste, ethnicity, and language groups. Inequalities of income, opportunity and power are linked with disparities in access to productive assets and basic services. In particular, gender equality and women's empowerment are recognized prerequisites for sustainable development. Implementing nationally appropriate social protection measures and providing decent work for all is imperative to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

12. Ms. Akhtar highlighted the importance and opportunity for regional collaboration and transfer of knowledge. ESCAP had an important role to play in this regard. Greater regional connectivity, to overcome the negative impact of small domestic markets and geographic constraints, provides an important basis to achieve the post-2015 development agenda, including the SDGs. A clear regional roadmap on implementation of the post–2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, is needed, inclusive of means of implementation, as without this it would be impossible to stay on track in the achievement of future goals. Ms. Akhtar noted that an important objective of this meeting would be to define more clearly the future regional roadmap for supporting regional implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, including the SDGs, and inclusive of MOI and financing.

Session 1: Preparatory Session for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council: Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future

13. The preparatory session for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the theme "Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future" was organized as a high-level panel discussion to provide perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region, including from the region's least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States. The summary of the discussions is included in the Chair's Summary as Annex 1.

Session 2: Multi-stakeholder Roundtable on integration and transformation for sustainable development

14. H.E. Mr. Vahram Kazhoyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia, moderated the multi-stakeholder roundtable on integration and transformation for sustainable development. The session reflected on the key requirements, opportunities for, and barriers to integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development as well as the systemic transformations, including in governance approaches, institutions, markets, and technologies needed to achieve sustainable development. The panel discussion recognized that lack of political will, political instability, and weak social cohesion; inequitable allocation of resources; and the institutional and socio-cultural impediments to women's economic and political participation are key systemic barriers to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Initiatives are already underway to address these barriers, most notably: the restructuring of planning commissions to manage integration and to adopt more bottom-up approaches; improving institutions to enable them to contribute to better social, environmental, and economic outcomes; and, adopting green growth strategies.

15. Mr. M. Javed Malik, Member, National Planning Commission of Pakistan highlighted the importance of: political will; consistency between policy and practice; balancing resource allocation across three dimensions of sustainable development as well as the importance of optimal and efficient use of resources; the role of civil society in advancing sustainable development; and the need for a periodic review of progress at global and national levels. Dr. Pham Hoang Mai, Director-General, Department of Science, Education, Natural Resources

Environment, Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam discussed that the Green Growth Strategy of Viet Nam was put in place as a way to restructure the economy toward a more efficient use of resources and increased competitiveness. The Strategy brings together under one umbrella different policy agendas, including climate change, poverty, and environmental sustainability. Ms. Setaita Tupua Kalou, Principal Assistant, Secretary (Political and Treaties) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fiji, informed that her Government last year adopted the Green Economy Plan and stressed that sustainable development in Small Island Developing States could not be achieved without addressing disaster risk reduction and resilience. Ms. Helen Hakena, Leitana Nehan, Director, Women's Development Agency, PNG, gave emphasis on the role of local communities in decision-making on development and in the control of their own development path as well as natural resources. In this regard, she highlighted the need of a new model based upon a fair distribution of resources and wealth, social and gender justice, and accountability. She called on governments to reconsider a separate goal for inequality in the OWG, and to commit to a new model of development.

16. Discussants highlighted additional key issues. Ms. Farida Akhter, Executive Director, UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternatives) noted the need to focus more strongly on redistributive justice and addressing underlying economic development structures. Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, UN DESA, noted that elements of transformation came out very strongly from the panel discussion, including the need to adopt a long-term perspective on decision making; shifting from palliatives to addressing structural causes; the need to provide development justice; strengthening solidarity, social justice and accountability to people; adopting a human-centered approach to development; and greater involvement of civil society in decision-making. He noted that the deep concern on inequality expressed by many panelists has been also recognized by the members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals whose upcoming paper will propose equality as an additional focus area. Ms. Janneke van der Graaf-Kukler, Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, added that implementing the Rio+20 outcome document entail ensuring that women are able to participate in decision-making platforms as decision makers and leaders. She noted the importance of financing when discussing ways to address gender inequalities.She further underscored the importance of ensuring policymaking and implementation practices in all dimensions of sustainable development apply a gender lens.

17. In the open discussion which followed there was a call for a more ambitious set of targets for the post-2015 framework. Citing lessons learned from successful efforts to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the Asia Pacific region, the representative from UNAIDS highlighted the importance of bold and inclusive leadership, backed by strong platforms for participation to end new HIV infections in the region by 2030, an ambitious target on "ending the AIDS epidemic." Discussion also took place on the important issue of financing – especially beyond domestic and traditional sources. Partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms were deemed essential to ensure that the flow of financial resources is supportive to sustainable development. As such there is a need to incentivize investments in sustainable development to gain private sector traction on financing for sustainable development. In terms of strategies, participants further noted the need to strengthen capacities to monitor development outcomes. The need for new and better approaches to gender analysis, also at the community level including through the involvement of statisticians and academia, was highlighted. Civil society viewed new sources of financing such as public-private partnerships and south-south cooperation as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, traditional means of implementation, thus keeping the public sector at the centre of sustainable development financing. Financing can be raised through increased

development assistance, progressive taxation, financial transaction taxes and the redirection of military spending to development. It was noted that remittance-based financing should be discouraged as it "distorted the reality" of migration as an indicator of underdevelopment and inequality in the global economic system, and encouraged the "export" of vulnerable workers.

Session Three: Multi-Stakeholder roundtable on shared prosperity within planetary boundaries

18. Mr. Rae Kwon Chung, Director, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP, moderated the multi-stakeholder roundtable on shared prosperity within planetary boundaries. The session deliberated on how to meet regional aspirations, with particular reference to poverty eradication; inequality; sustainable, dynamic, resilient and inclusive growth; and issues of social justice while recognizing planetary limits.

19. H.E. Mr. Bektas Mukhametjanov, Vice-Minister of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing and exchange in coordinating solutions and initiatives to address environmental problems, noting that the Green Bridge Partnership Programme between Asia, the Pacific and Europe has made important contributions in this regard. Mr. Yogeesvaran Kumaraguru, Deputy Director General of Economic, Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia, shared his country's initiatives towards balancing development with utilization of resources, pursuing economic growth with equity, and taking a long-term perspective in developing investment and development plans. While effectively reducing poverty, Malaysia has also been able to successfully protect its environment, for example in enforcing a minimum forest cover requirement. Recognizing the key role of successful ocean management in enhancing the prosperity of the Pacific, Ms. Lorraine Kershaw, International Legal Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat discussed the initiatives of Pacific SIDS in ensuring that this relationship was recognized in global sustainable development debates, particularly with regard to Pacific SIDS advocacy for a stand-alone SDG on oceans and seas.

20. Following panelist presentations, several discussant remarks were made. Ms. Eni Lestari, Chairperson, International Migrant Alliance, reflected on her personal experience as a migrant worker to illustrate how forced migration and displacement, which result from disasters and environmental degradation, climate change, inequality and lack of economic opportunities, are undermining shared prosperity in the region. While remittances from migrant workers represent an important source of revenue for many countries the region, they should not be used as a source of financing for development. The human rights of migrants and the social costs of migration must be addressed to enable shared prosperity for all. In reflecting on the evolution of economic development and environment in Japan, Mr. Hideyuki Mori, President of the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), noted that although priorities have changed over time, social development and environmental sustainability have always underpinned the sustained progress of Japan. Mr. Asif Ibrahim, Chairperson of the Taskforce on Inclusive and Sustainable Business of the ESCAP Business Advisory Council stated that strategies and approaches should be adopted to create employment while avoiding transgression of planetary boundaries. Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP in Asia and the Pacific noted that there remained a false dichotomy between development and the environment in much of the region. Mr. Zahedi noted that planetary boundaries was not just an environmental issue but about maintaining capacity of our planet to meet human needs and sustain economic growth. He observed that there were many positive lessons from which to draw

from the region itself, but despite this the region is becoming less efficient in its use of resources and is rapidly eroding its natural resource base. Making the necessary transformation towards a green economy remained the biggest collective challenge.

21. In the open discussion which followed it was noted that employing strategic environmental assessment provided great potential to overcome the assumed dichotomy between economic growth and the environment in policymaking. There was a need to move the focus away from false trade-offs between environment and development. Lessons could be learned on integration from implementation by local governments and civil society in the region. The importance of technology transfer in avoiding environmental tipping points and in managing the adverse impacts of climate change was emphasized. Civil society representatives expressed agreement on the importance of technology transfer but cautioned that technology alone should not be regarded as a solution to the many development challenges the region faces and highlighted the importance of government support for local innovation. The involvement of communities in technology needs assessment, innovation, and technology transfer was highlighted as essential to success. Finally, civil society representatives challenged governments to be more ambitious in addressing climate change, and keeping global temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees, committing to carbon emission reductions and providing adequate, predictable and appropriate climate finance on the basis of historical responsibility for climate change.

Session Four: Multi-Stakeholder Roundtable on means of implementation – Financing, Technology and Global partnerships

22. The roundtable was moderated by H.E. Prof. Tissa Vitarana, Senior Minister for Scientific Affairs, Sri Lanka. The roundtable focused on the key topics of means of implementation for sustainable development in particular financing, technology and global partnership. Prof. Vitarana highlighted the Sri Lankan positive experience of investing in promotion of science and technology, which has resulted in several U.S. registered patents that have paid off the investment.

23. Mr. Kang-hyeon Yun, Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea noted the varying technology needs between developed and developing countries and highlighted the importance of technologies that are pro-development, free from intellectual property rights and easily absorbed by developing partners. He also highlighted that development financed through ODA alone will not suffice, and that incentivizing business investment decisions in favor of sustainable development is needed to close the funding gap. Mr. Samuel Grundler noted that, as isolated small economies= with an underdeveloped private sector and high dependence on imports, many Pacific SIDS face limits to economic development. He highlighted the need for the application of innovative technologies to shift away from inefficient and expensive resource use and called for the United Nations to provide assistance in the monitoring and reporting of partnerships for the post-2015 development agenda. Dr. Kanchana Wanichkorn, Director, Department of International Affairs of the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Office of Thailand, noted that science, technology and innovation (STI), including human resources and national innovation systems development for STI, should be considered an effective investment instead of expenditure for creating long term competitiveness, breaking away from the middle-income trap, and sustaining inclusive growth. Also highlighted was the need to create appropriate eco-system and institutional structures conducive to STI, including the establishment of an ESCAP Committee on STI to foster region wide dialogue and best practice sharing on STI for

development .

24. Mr. Sang-Baek Chris Kang, Director for International Strategy, Green Technology Center of the Republic of Korea, shared key conclusions from the Regional Dialogue on Technology Facilitation for Sustainable Development. The event was organized in partnership with Green Technology Center Korea, and participated by academia and national institutes working in, and dedicated to, the area of technology facilitation . In noting its outcomes, Mr. Kang highlighted the call for regional and local technology facilitation mechanisms, and appropriate implementation based on experiences from the region. Institutions and frameworks with the aim of promoting development transfer and dissemination of technologies across countries do exist - and provided for many insights in technology facilitation. Science, technology and innovation have not been well-integrated in development agendas; science and technology should be placed to serve the poor and address pressing development challenges such as poverty alleviation, health and sanitation, food security. The dialogue echoed the calls for deepening integration of the local context, starting from need assessments for technologies to implementation. The role of partnerships between CSOs and governments and grassroots stakeholders was also emphasized in this context.

25. Mr. Antonio Tujan, Jr., Director, IBON International called for: redistributive justice for sustainable development through channeling ODA to investment in people instead of infrastructure; reform of trade, financial and monetary structures; climate finance architecture addressing the problem of external debt; and, effective and binding regulations for corporations across borders. Ms. Caitlin Wiesen, Chair of the UNDG Asia-Pacific Post-2015 Steering Committee and Regional Manager, UNDP/Asia-Pacific Regional Centre noted the importance of MOI in achieving the proposed sustainable development goals. She noted that the OWG had highlighted key dimensions for MOI: equitable multilateral trading and financial systems; financing for development, especially with regards to SIDS and countries with special needs; the role of ODA, which is critical though insufficient; the enhanced role of the private sector; capacity development, particularly in data collection for informed policy making and improved management of SDGs; and, global partnerships for sustainable development. She highlighted that the important role of the United Nations in making adequate development financing available for countries, in monitoring development goals and holding regular consultations.

Session Five: The Way Forward: Shaping an effective an dynamic regional process for sustainable development

26. Ms. Shamshad Akhtar moderated the high level roundtable on the way forward. Ms. Setaita Tupua-Kalou, Principal Assistant Secretary International Cooperation (Political and Treaties), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fiji, underlined the need for coherence of national, regional and international processes setting the agenda for sustainable development, particularly recognizing the consensus driven process leading up the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. She also highlighted the need to strengthen institutional capacities in SIDS, especially in the use of ICT for data aggregation and analysis. H.E. Mr. Bektas Mukhametjanov, Vice-Minister of Environment and Water Resources, Kazakhstan, noted that the work of any organization has to be based on the work of the member states. He identified a clear role that ESCAP has to play in bringing together works under integration, monitoring and evaluation. H.E. Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain stressed the importance of the regional processes and the role of the regional commissions, and emphasized the need for inclusive and action-oriented outcomes based on stakeholder

participation. Resolution 67/290, he said, was a guiding document on regional architecture. He noted that the ESCAP Commission Sessions also have their own mandate and structure. A stand-alone meeting of the APFSD that would signal political commitment and ownership on the process was therefore preferred. The importance of a focus on the substance that the forum should carry forward and how it can integrate with the global processes most effectively was highlighted. H.E. Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren Minister of Environment and Green Development in Mongolia highlighted the work done in Mongolia to promote a Green Development Strategy. She supported the idea of a roadmap for implementation that would support a regional agenda based on national and subregional priorities, with specific regional and subregional actions, including a monitoring and reporting framework. Such a roadmap should be developed in a fully inclusive and participatory manner. It would require capacity development for public, private and civil society organizations. In this respect the regional roadmap can clearly articulate the MOI. She supported the organization of the APFSD back-to-back with the ESCAP commission session, and the establishment of a committee on financing for sustainable development within ESCAP and the proposal of a Committee for STI, which could be deliberated at the subsequent Commission Session. Dr. Mercedita Sombilla highlighted the need for a strong institutional framework and commitment to good governance and strong institutions. At the regional level, various United Nations bodies, particularly ESCAP – remain critical in effecting links between national governments and the global bodies regarding implementation. Other stakeholders are emerging, and a mechanism needs to be developed to enhance coherence of the various processes. Tools to measure and evaluate governance structures and constituencies are needed. Any review process should be simple and inclusive –and good practices exist on which this can be built. The HLPF could provide thought leadership by synthesizing and providing analysis on the reports, and a transparent and inclusive process was critical.

27. As a panel discussant, Mr. Kosala Wickramanayake, President of the International Business Council of Sri Lanka, noted that implementation of sustainable development would require political will to pass appropriate legislation and promote healthy economic performance, and that the business community is part of the solution. Voluntary annual monitoring and sharing of best practices was highlighted as an enabling mechanism. Mr. Uchita de Zoysa provided an overview of the evolution of the challenges to sustainability since 1992, and emphasized the need for a new model of leadership. The HLPF should provide a new architecture of political design and discourse, fundamentally founded on a conviction towards a great transformation, a transformation that is inclusive. He recommended the inaugural APFSD as a model for the HLPF in terms of civil society and other stakeholder participation. He shared that a regional civil society engagement mechanism has been developed and adopted by civil society organizations as a basis for further engagement. Mr. Lawrence Surendra stressed better and more synergetic coordination between the United Nations agencies and emphasized knowledge partnerships for more effective public-policy interventions towards sustainable development. The APFSD, he said, raised immediate questions of organization and agenda, including close linkages with Commissions Sessions. Mr. Nikhil Seth outlined the key dimensions of the HLPF, including at the regional level. He recommended the regional process as a forum for engagement, for promoting solidarity and universality, strong science-policy interface and as a home for a regional accountability framework.

28. The discussions which followed supported subregional consultations, the sharing of best practices and full deliberation as the basis for a regional voice. Preferences for both a Chair's Summary and negotiated document, as outcome documents of the APFSD were expressed by different delegations. It was felt that the APFSD should be built largely on the

basis of the organizational principles of the HLPF, as set out in GA resolution 67/290. It should be ambitious but pragmatic, and give political commitment and ownership over the process. It should be a forum for providing a regional voice on common priorities, sharing experiences among countries with proximity for qualitative impacts, engaging stakeholders, promoting solidarity and universality, promoting stronger science-policy interface, and promoting regional accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders.

29. Views were expressed in support of the APFSD as a stand-alone event and it was suggested that a subregional process could precede the APFSD. However, whether integrated or back to back with the Commission Session, it was felt that such a decision requires further consultation. A subregional process could be held before the APFSD. A regional roadmap was viewed as important and could possibly link national, subregional, regional and global levels. It could be developed in a participatory way, after SDG adoption. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms should be regular, inclusive and transparent process. In this regard, there is a need to establish indicators to measure achievements.

30. The role of ESCAP in enhancing synergies among subregions, highlighting the special contexts and needs of the subregions; providing an interface with the UN system for monitoring, evaluating, reporting; supporting regional cooperation and integration based on sustainable development; and providing more coherent policy advice with a possible mew knowledge platform with academia and UN agencies, was noted. It was proposed that ESCAP establish a Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, and a Committee on Financing for Sustainable Development.

Session Six: High-level roundtable on the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda: A regional perspective from Asia and the Pacific

31. The panel was moderated by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, who delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. The statement by the Deputy Secretary- General underlined the role of the rule of law and well- functioning institutions in the post-2015 development agenda, as acknowledged in the Declaration adopted by all 193 Member States at the 2012 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law. Tangible goods such as legal frameworks that give effect to human rights, independent and effective justice systems that provide access to justice, and mechanisms for holding public officers accountable are all encompassed by the concept of the Rule of Law. The Deputy Secretary-General underscored the important role that Regional Commissions can play in providing input to the global discussions to set the post-2015 development agenda.

32. Mr. Kamal Hossein, Former Minister of Law, Government of Bangladesh, highlighted the critical connection between law and development. He discussed the key elements of the rule of law highlighting sound legal frameworks and a proactive judiciary. He said experiences gathered in the last few decades show that sustainable development objectives cannot be effectively pursued without a governance framework that ensures transparency and accountability. He referred to the need to ensure that the laws are used to protect, liberate and empower. Ms. Lorraine Kershaw, International Legal Adviser, Pacific Islands, noted that given the regions, first-hand experience on the destabilizing impacts of the absence of rule of law, the Pacific has aligned itself with the advocacy for including a stand-alone goal on rule of law and peaceful and stable societies. She cited the experience of Solomon Islands in which the achievement of MDG7 is strongly attributed to the strengthening of the rule of law. She also provided examples of regional approaches in support of security and governance

institutions. Dr. William Patton, Special Envoy to the International Development Law Organization, noted that at the international level, the rule of law and sustainable development are inseparable. The rule of law gives a stable platform to fight poverty and discrimination and sets standards for development interventions. The rule of law is also about delivering and providing recourse to justice as well as about establishing predictability. Citing specific country examples from the Asia Pacific region, he noted that while different countries have different priorities with respect to the rule of law, its values are universal. He said that it is important to tailor the SDGs to accommodate these national priorities without undermining the aim of setting common goals and targets. Finally he called for better measurements of law and justice. Ms. Pitikan Sithidej, Acting Director General of Rights and Liberties Protection, Ministry of Justice, Thailand, shared the view that rule of law and development are inter-related and mutually reinforcing and stressed that rule of law should be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. Ms. Sithidej shared the efforts of the ASEAN to strengthen the rule of law in the region by forging cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies to combat translational crimes.

33. Following the panel discussion, discussants delivered their remarks. Mr. Haroon Sharif, Advisor, Regional Economic Cooperation (South Asia), World Bank, in a joint presentation with Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan, referred to the role of the judiciary in achieving transformations through their decisions. He also mentioned how a rule of law-based system requires that institutions are trusted by communities. Moving forward, he said that the governments and international community should broadly engage constituencies who are starting to demand for stronger rule of law. He said efforts to define targets and indicators should be preceded by a reflection of what the international community intends to deliver on the ground. Ms. Kate Lappin, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development highlighted that the purpose of the rule of law is to establish enabling conditions for justice and to hold the powerful to account. Regarding the definition of targets and indicators, she highlighted the importance of incorporating a wide range of indicators that consider, among others, the degree of confidence women have in the legal system, their perceptions of safety, as well as indicators to measure access to justice.

34. One speaker stated that because rule of law cannot be measured, any attempts to bridge interpretation of the concept of sustainable development to rule of law will be counter-productive and will not contribute to the consensus. Instead, rule of law should be developed on the basis of local and cultural differences of each jurisdiction. Thus the notion that rule of law should be included as part of the global development agenda beyond 2015 could not be supported. One delegation did not support broad interpretation of the concept of sustainable development, that would introduce "inconsistent or contradictory" elements such as rule of law, peace and security, human security, individually or in the form of a so-called 4th dimensions of sustainable development" Civil society representatives said the rule of law should also ensure conflict resolution, prevent youth brain drain, and deliver development justice.

Formal statements

Overarching priorities and concerns regarding the post-2015 development agenda were identified by governments and other delegations

35. Participants generally agreed on the seven priority areas identified in the note by the secretariat titled *Fostering sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*, namely eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality; pursuing sustained and inclusive economic growth; gender equality and empowerment; building resilience to multiple shocks; responding to population dynamics and urbanization; enhancing resource efficiency and natural resource management; deepening regional integration and connectivity, while recognising the sustainable development priorities of ESCAP subregions, and reflecting critical issues related to the Means of Implementation (MOI) inclusive of financing, science, technology and innovation, trade, capacity building, partnerships and governance for a transformation towards sustainable development.

36. Poverty eradication was identified as one of the most important overarching challenges of the region, in line with the global consensus to date. Several delegations stressed the need to ensure that economic growth was sustained and inclusive, and with benefits that are equitably distributed. This was important for job creation, poverty reduction and for maintaining socio-political stability. It was also highlighted that food security through sustainable agriculture formed a core element in overcoming poverty, generating income and promoting human capitals.

37. While looking to a future sustainable development goal framework, and an ambitious, balanced and development-oriented outcome to the negotiations on the post-2015 Development Agenda, country delegates called for a final push for MDG achievement, acknowledging both the achievements and shortcomings in progress in several areas. In this regard, the global importance attached to issues such as sustainable access to sustainable modern energy services, provision of universal health coverage, provision of universal access to and safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, especially for women and girls, was also emphasized by delegates. At the same time, the issue of integrated water resources management emerged as a priority for the region to achieve sustainability and mitigate disaster risks. Facing the challenges of sustainable energy supply and energy trade, energy security had been the forefront work of the member countries of ESCAP. The spirit and best of the current MDGs should be carried forward, consistently addressed and further strengthened. The progress made in achieving the MDGs should also be evaluated, and priority attached to capacity building.

38. One delegation expressed concern regarding the mismatch between the ambitions for a multi-dimensional development agenda and the relatively low commitment to provide financial and technological support to developing countries. While acknowledging that peace, security and governance were important enablers of development, one delegation cautioned that these issues should not be placed at the centre of the development agenda.

Several issues that should be better addressed in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals were also identified

39. Issues identified by delegates that required stronger recognition in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals issues included the global economic and financial architecture, disaster risk reduction and preparedness and building resilience to disasters, as well as the need to address the digital divide.

40. A strong and stable global economic and financial architecture with full and meaningful participation of all countries and as an important public good was seen as an overarching component of the framework for any set of goals and objectives. Civil society called for

accountability and reporting mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in sustainable development, including international and financial trade institutions, donor agencies and the private sector.

41. Asia and the Pacific, as the world's most disaster-prone region, needs to build resilience to natural disasters as an urgent priority. Developing countries in the region are already facing significant risks from adverse impacts of climate change in terms of persistent droughts, extreme weather events, massive flooding, among others. The meeting emphasized that frequent large-scale natural disasters could wipe-out hard earned development gains overnight. It was underscored that disaster risk reduction and preparedness is not being addressed sufficiently in the ongoing process of the Open Working Group of on Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting called for greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction in the post-2015 development agenda. The meeting underlined that governments should be encouraged and supported to mainstream disaster risk reduction into all sectors of development, with adequate legal, institutional and accountability frameworks. Improved disaster and climate change related statistics, including statistical standards on those topics for improved cross-country comparability was also highlighted as critical for better management of disaster-related risks. Regional and international cooperation were highlighted as crucial in strengthening governments' efforts in reducing disaster risks and building resilience.

42. Affordable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), in particular broadband Internet was also recognized as a key means of implementation for achieving sustainable development goals, and regional and international cooperation were highlighted as crucial aspects of enhancing connectivity throughout Asia and the Pacific. It was also recognized that Asia and the Pacific is the most digitally divided region in the world and that there was a need to urgently address the digital divide, through increased infrastructure investments and targeted policy reforms.

43. Other potential areas to be addressed by the SDGs included infrastructure-related issues such as sustainable transport. This was suggested as a standalone cluster in forging the list of SDGs, including special attention to be given to promoting road safety in the context of shaping SDGs as well as UNDA beyond 2015.Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) was underlined as a vital element of future set of SDGs.

44. The establishment of measurable goals and targets that capture the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development was underlined as a key challenge, as were the efforts needed to monitor progress towards related targets. Delegates stressed the need to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the data revolution for strengthened accountability and a strong monitoring framework.

45. The value of civil registration and vital statistics systems for planning development strategies and monitoring development outcomes was underscored. Furthermore, universal civil registration was recognized as a critical means for all people to have a legal identity and as such be able to participate actively in economic and political activities and access essential services.

46. Civil society participants recommended, inter-alia, a standalone goal on sustainable cities and human settlements, considering regional urbanization trends and the relevance in multiple dimensions of development, including several specific targets related to eliminating slum conditions, capacity for integrated urban planning, universal access to inclusive, safe and green public space, resilience to climate change and universal access to affordable, equitable, safe and sustainable transport. Governments and UN agencies were

called on to articulate a universal definition of children, adolescents, and youth to ensure consistency across countries.

47. Civil society highlighted that the people-centered principle should also guide the means of implementation, such as in setting the direction of science, technology and innovations; and remove legal and policy barriers that hamper the response to further spread of HIV. Civil society endorsed a separate goal on addressing inequality consistent with the upcoming OWG paper adding a 17th goal on equality. Equality targets should also be incorporated accross other goals and require disaggregated data in measuring progress towards meeting these goals.Stronger consideration of migration issues in OWG discussions was advocated, considering the strong linkage between migration and development in the Asia Pacific region and the need to address the plight of migrant workers and refugees.

48. In light of the trends related to informal labour and vulnerable employment, civil society called on member States to set ambitious targets to ensure equal and decent work opportunities, in particular supporting a focus on youth in the region. The need for consistent approach to the issues confronting vulnerable groups, including but not limited to women and children, indigenous peoples, farmers, fishers, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

49. UN system representatives called for, *inter-alia*:

1) appropriate targets within the post-2015 framework on fostering migration partnerships, increased well-being of migrants and their families and protection from exploitation and abuse, addressing human trafficking and lowering unnecessary exploitative costs and barriers of mobility and remittances;

2) an ambitious target framework on "ending the AIDS epidemic," towards zero new infections; zero stigma and discrimination; and zero AIDS-related deaths;

3) a goal of full employment and decent work; and

4) strengthened attention to migration, and mainstreaming of migration into other focus areas such as health and population dynamics, climate change, sustainable cities and human settlements and global partnerships for sustainable development, as well as targets on migration relating to planned and well-managed migration; lowered costs and barriers to mobility and remittances; addressing trafficking, exploitation and abuse of migrants; ensuring access to education, health and decent work, reducing and minimizing the negative effects of forced migration and promoting global partnerships on migration.

50. One intergovernmental organization also called for a dedicated goal on water to reflect transboundary surface and groundwater challenges.

Key goals and principles for a post-2015 development agenda were highlighted

51. Among the goals and principles relevant to a post-2015 development agenda highlighted were universality, the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and people-centered development. Development approaches that are unique to the region were recognized, including the sufficiency economy philosophy. The pursuit of happiness was also presented as a basis for a vision for the Asia-Pacific, as a universal aspiration of mankind.

52. Several priority, people-focused dimensions of a post-2015 development agenda were noted, including the need for job creation, Universal Health Coverage, education for all, sustainable agriculture, integrated water resources management, food security and human security in the context of the threat of climate change and sustainable energy for all. The

importance of human capital investments was also stressed.

53. Civil society urged the adoption of development justice in several dimensions, including redistributive justice to address imbalances in access to and distribution of wealth, resources, and power, highlighting alarming trends that weaken people's control over resources, such as the commodification of genetic resources and land- grabbing. A human-rights based approach to the formulation of SDGs and its principles including non-discrimination, equality, participation, inclusion, accountability, and the rule of law was supported.

54. As globally, different views were expressed regarding the application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility –while some delegations emphasized the application of this principle to all or many aspects of a new SDG framework and post-2015 development agenda, one delegation expressed the view that the principle should be applied only to global environmental issues. It was also noted that a universal agenda is not in contradiction with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, and that the mismatch in aspirations and lifestyles between developed and developing countries should be bridged by a principle of care and share.

Strategies for a post-2015 Development agenda were outlined

55. Strategies for implementation identified by member states included building a low-carbon society; resource productivity; education for sustainable development as an important dimension of education programmes; and green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, including as a strategy to address inequality. The important role of sustainable transport, logistics and facilitation in the context of overall connectivity and its contribution to sustainable development was acknowledged.

56. Sustainable consumption and production was emphasized as a cross-cutting strategy, and strong support was expressed for the implementation of the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production as a global cooperation framework. Related to this, the concept of a sound material cycle and the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) was also highlighted and it was recommended that sustainable industrialization and be proposed as one of the SDGs. One intergovernmental organization emphasized the importance of the nexus approach in addressing water, food and energy security.

57. Member states recalled important commitments and agreements related to sustainable development, such as the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, references to means of implementation under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus, and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development.

58. They also highlighted some important initiatives that would support strategy development and implementation: the outcomes from the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum 2013 and the Sustainable Energy for All initiative; The Satoyama Initiative; Hyogo Framework for Action (the successor framework of which would be adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai); and the upcoming review of the global efforts on Education for Sustainable Development in Nagoya City and Okayama City in November 2014; and the UN Compact. In Asia Pacific, the private sector had established the Sustainable Business Network through the ESCAP Business Advisory Council to tackle specific issues related to sustainable development.

59. Representatives of United Nations system organizations highlighted several strategic

approaches, including, inter-alia, the concept of culture for development; and the strategic positioning of education, science and culture as drivers and enablers for a sustainable future. The need to address the linkages between increasingly diverse population dynamics, the environment and inequality was underlined, along with the urgency of focusing on investing in young people to reap the benefits of the "demographic dividend." Sexual and reproductive health and rights should be secured. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development was highlighted as being critical to the effort to eradicate poverty and strongly linked to several other development priorities.

60. Key strategies in relation to ending hunger and making the transition to a sustainable agriculture and food system were identified as eradicating hunger and improving human nutrition, including, among other points, targeting smallholder producers and the landless and an emphasis on fair access to resources; sustainable consumption and production systems, including, among other points, reducing food losses and waste, investing in the whole food chain, promoting sustainable intensification across all food production systems; and promoting climate-smart and energy-smart agriculture; and inclusive and effective governance, including an equitable distribution of transition costs and benefits.

61. The influence of climate change and natural disasters on human mobility was highlighted. Forced migration due to climate change should be minimized and migration is considered an adaptation strategy, it was asserted. The need to guarantee civic rights and enhance governance and accountability at all levels was emphasized and related to this, the need to address structural, legal and social barriers to accessing HIV and AIDS services by marginalized and key populations.

62. A long-term vision of a sustainable world was outlined. Such a vision was needed to inform and guide a "medium-term" post-2015 development agenda, and ensure that approaches and solutions proposed would seek transformational, rather than incremental change and outcomes. Information on the upcoming historic first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, a new body that would place environmental issues at the heart of the global agenda, was shared. Meaningful participation that would ensure that the UNEA and the HLPF reflected the concerns, priorities and lesons from the Asia and the Pacific region, was urged. APFSD and ESCAP Commission session recommendations realted to environmental issues could also inform discussions at the UN Environment Assembly.

Governments and other stakeholders provided several perspectives on the means of implementation as an important part of the post-2015 development agenda.

63. There was support for a global emphasis on STI, innovative mobilization of resources and global partnership for sustainable development. It was noted that means of implementation and global partnership should be linked. Means of implementation should be equitably devoted to all three dimensions of sustainable development and progress should be quantifiable. The means of implementation should form part of each goal.

64. The means of implementation should match the ambition and comprehensive scope of the SDGs, and the ambitious means of implementation should be matched by its review system. A clear timeline and pathway of delivery is needed. A comprehensive monitoring framework and data/information enhancement consistent with the global call for a data revolution was suggested.

65. Implementation of each target, it was felt, should be based on the unique circumstances of each country and tailored in a way that is aligned with national economic strategies and priorities.

66. While some delegations focused on new and innovative mechanisms, including domestic resource mobilization, others stressed the role of official development assistance (ODA) and of meeting global commitments.

67. The reform of global governance was highlighted, including for giving real voice and participation to developing countries. Global partnerships should be equitable, inclusive with mutual accountability and fair sharing of responsibilities. Developed countries should undertake concrete and measurable obligations including to support the efforts of developing countries with enhanced financial and technological support as a part of CBDR. The need to strengthen coordination between relevant global and regional inter-governmental fora to promote sustainable development was noted.

68. Delegates recognized that trade, technology and finance are essential means of implementation of all SDGs. In this regard, a rule-based and equitable multilateral trading system that ensures effective market access of products and services was critical. The private sector called for an early conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, and underlined its role in leading regional integration through global and regional supply chains and production networks that provided opportunities for small and medium enterprises, to grow and prosper..

69. UN system representatives underlined the successes of an inclusive and partnership approach. Regional cooperation and south-south interactions were urged, to adapt to a changing development landscape. Transformational shifts in multiple sectors would require science, technology and innovation, and broad support for the view that education fulfills a much broader function in empowering children and adults alike to become active participants in their societies. The importance of disaggregated data was emphasized.

Side events

70. In addition to the plenary sessions, side events, titled "Launch of ESCAP partnership with Green Growth Best Practice Initiative" and "The Collective Way Forward of the HLPF: Regional CSO & stakeholders engagement for a more efficient, effective, coherent and integrated approach to sustainable development" were held on 20 May and 21 May respectively. ESCAP, FAO and UNEP co-hosted an evening reception on 20 May 2014 titled "Towards a green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction: An Asia-Pacific perspective."